

EVILS OF THE STATE  
REFORM CLUB  
OF  
IRELAND:  
*Author*

THEIR CAUSES, AND THEIR REMEDY—

A POOR LAW.

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BY JOHN REVANS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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HAVING held the office of Secretary to the Poor Law Inquiry for England and Wales, which led to the Amendment of the Laws in 1834, and subsequently that of Secretary to the Poor Inquiry Commission in Ireland, I have had peculiar opportunities for contrasting a state of society in which the most extensive public provision for the destitute has long been established, with one in which there is as little public provision as in any country in Europe. No other person has enjoyed equal opportunities, for no other person was engaged on both inquiries. The power of making the contrast is thus almost peculiarly mine. It becomes therefore my duty, as a public servant, to lay the knowledge which favourable circumstances have enabled me to acquire before the country, in order that it may come to a correct judgment respecting the important subject in the inquiry about which I was appointed to assist. I would hope that by thus attempting to be useful I take the best means of showing myself worthy of the two important trusts which his Majesty's Government thought fit to confer upon me.

Few, perhaps, will be able to conceive, that the mode in which the destitute in society shall be subsisted can afford matter for very grave consideration. The mass of mankind consider it purely a question of benevolence to the poor, or of convenience to the wealthy. They are not aware that it is intimately connected with wages, with capital, with rent, with crime, with population, and even with education; and that it vitally affects the interests of every member of society, although apparently only concerning a very insignificant portion of a single class.

From the investigation which I was enabled to make in the four years during which I was engaged upon the two inquiries, I am convinced that the advantages of a public provision for the destitute able-bodied greatly preponderate over the evils; and that to the absence of Poor Laws in Ireland, and to the

existence of them in England, the present difference between those countries, both for centuries under the same Government, and with nearly the same laws, is mainly attributable. With Poor Laws the people of England have become the most comfortable, whilst, without them, the people of Ireland have remained the most wretched community in Europe. In Ireland, famine is almost of annual recurrence; crime is there frightful, both from its atrocity and its extent; agriculture in the rudest state; manufactures scarcely in existence; and the country overrun with hordes of wandering mendicants. In England famine is now only matter of history; crime less perhaps than in any other country; agriculture in the highest perfection; and manufactures, both in extent and in perfection, are unrivalled. Yet the people of Ireland are clever, industrious, and kind-hearted; the soil superior to that of England, and the climate equal.

On the one hand, the political disqualification, during centuries, of the great majority of the population, and the compulsory payments to a Church, to the tenets of which they did not subscribe, have been assigned as the causes of the present state of Ireland. But granting to these their fullest powers, they are incapable of producing such a state of society. A very considerable body of the people of England were similarly circumstanced during nearly an equal period. The Protestant Dissenters of England bore the same relation to the State Church as did the Catholics of Ireland, both as to political disqualification and as to forcible payments in support of the Ministers of that Church. Yet the Dissenters of England thrived and were peaceable, whilst the Catholics of Ireland were wretched and turbulent. The Dissenters of England long paid tithes and church dues without a murmur, whilst the Catholics of Ireland were constantly in rebellion.

On the other hand, the wretchedness of Ireland is attributed to the influence of the prevailing faith. It is certainly remarkable that the Catholic communities both of Europe and of America are generally inferior in civilization to the Protestant. In the north of Scotland, however the people of which are Protestant, a state of society exists nearly approximating to that in Ireland; whilst the Catholic peasantry of Prussia, of France, and of Belgium, are equal in condition to those of the Protestant countries in the north of Europe. Spain, Portugal, Italy, and the Venetian States, have each held a higher position in power, in wealth, and in commerce, though Catholic, than either of the Protestant countries of Europe, excepting Holland and England. And it is a singular circumstance that England is indebted for her principal manufactures to Catholic communities;



to Flanders for her woollen manufacture, to France and Italy for her cotton; to Italy for the the introduction, and to France for the improvement of her silk manufacture.

I think it may be said, that states of civilization and particular creeds are co-existing effects, rather than the cause or the consequence of each other. The cause of both being a particular state of mind, or degree of knowledge. It could hardly be said that the worship of external objects, or of a plurality of Deities, are the causes of a savage not cultivating the arts of civilization.

The wretchedness of the Irish peasantry in sometimes attributed to the excess of their number compared with the extent of the land. I find, however, upon comparing purely agricultural countries in Ireland with those which are purely agricultural in England, that there is no foundation for the assertion. Galway, the population of which is one of the most wretched in Ireland, contains as many acres to each individual as Berks, Bucks, Devon, Essex, Monmouth, Norfolk, Hampshire, and Suffolk; half an acre to each individual more than Bedford and Sussex; and an acre to each individual more than Hertford, Kent, and Wiltshire. Meath, which is purely a grazing county, contains three acres to each individual, whilst Hertfordshire, also a grazing county, has only two acres to each individual. Yet there is scarcely a more wretched peasantry in Ireland than that of Meath, and scarcely a better conditioned peasantry in England than that of Hertfordshire. Kildare, the population of which is as wretched as that of any county in Leinster, has a larger proportion of land to its population than any county in England, with the exceptions of Dorset, Hereford, Lincoln, and Oxford. There are but four counties in the whole of Munster, Leinster, and Connaught; viz: Cork, Louth, Longford, and Sligo, which have a smaller comparative acreage than Kent, Wilts, and Hertford. This comparison is peculiarly favourable to the assertion, as it claims no allowance for the acknowledged superior fertility of the soil of Ireland. Those who attribute the wretchedness of Ireland to the excess of its population, will of course admit that the agricultural populations will be in a good or a bad state, as each county may have a large or a small proportional acreage. Kerry and Kildare have  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres to each individual, whilst Louth has only  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , yet assuredly the condition of the peasantry of Louth is superior to that of Kerry or Kildare. Again, Waterford, in which the peasantry are fully as comfortable as in any county in the south of Ireland, has an acre and a half less to each person than Kerry and Kildare, and an acre less than Galway and Meath. In making these calculations I have deducted the unprofitable land.

The non-residence of a large number of the proprietors has also been stated to be the cause of the present condition of Ireland. It will, however, be seen, on reference to the subject of "Landlord and Tenant," in the Appendix F. to the Report of the Irish Poor Commissioners, that the people on the estates of absentee, are frequently in a better condition than those on the estates of resident proprietors. Many properties in England are rarely visited by those to whom they belong; the proprietors of others chiefly reside in France or in Italy; and on some estates there is not even a residence. Yet I never heard it remarked that the absence of the proprietor was an evil, and I do not believe that the people care whether he is present or absent.

The state of Belgium is a remarkable refutation of two of the theories relative to Ireland. The population of that country is Catholic, and the lands are much subdivided, yet the people are prosperous and orderly, the cultivation of the land is of the highest description, and manufactures flourish. But a provision for the destitute has existed in Belgium longer than in any country excepting England.

Although I do not consider it to be a conclusive argument in favour of a public provision for the destitute, that in the most prosperous countries of Europe and America an extensive provision has long existed; still I do think the fact perfectly refutes the assertion, that poor laws are destructive to the wealth and morals of society. In England, the South of Scotland, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Prussia, Denmark, the Hanstowns, most of the German States, and parts of Switzerland, there has long been a most extensive provision for the poor—whilst in Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Sardinia, Greece, and Turkey, there is not any. Again, the United States of North America have poor laws, but the countries of South America have not.—(Foreign Communications, Appendix F, 'Poor Law Inquiry in England.')

In order to exhibit the advantages to be derived from a provision for the destitute, I shall first show how the peculiar evils which afflict Ireland arise, and how a Poor Law would prevent them; I shall then show to what extent similar evils have been avoided in England by the adoption of a Poor Law; and shall conclude with the extent and causes of the evils which have arisen from a public provision in England and in other countries.

# NATURE AND CAUSES OF THE EVILS OF IRELAND.

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As the population of Ireland is almost entirely agricultural, and as no information, which can be relied upon, was obtained by the Poor Inquiry Commission relative to the population of the few large towns, I shall confine my remarks to the rural population.

The circumstances under which the rural population of Ireland earn their subsistence are quite different from those which obtain in England. The rural population of Ireland for the most part can neither be designated petty farmers nor labourers, in the sense in which those terms are applied in Great Britain. Scarcely with an exception, the whole of the peasantry hold land, and also hire themselves for wages. Some hold more land than others—some work more for hire than others.\* Their holdings vary from one to ten or twelve acres. Those who hold above five acres of land are called “small farmers,”† and give the principal part of the produce as rent: those who hold land not exceeding two acres generally receive the land in lieu of wages from those by whom they are permanently employed. They are termed “cottiers,”‡ and form a small class; they are far more numerous in some districts than in others; and are the labourers of the gentry and of farmers who hold more than 20 acres. Both classes are equally destitute of capital, and might be designated labourers paid in land. One class till ten or twelve acres each, and are allowed to retain a subsistence for themselves and their families out of the produce. The other class give their labour for as much land as in fair seasons will yield sufficient food for themselves and their families. Between those who pay their rents entirely by labouring for their landlords, and those who wholly depend upon the produce of their holdings for the payment of their rents, there is every possible gradation; some being more dependant upon their farms than upon hire, whilst others depend more upon hire than upon their farms for the means of making such payments.

Between the cottier and his landlord and employer a rate of wages and a rate of rent are always fixed. From the double connection which exists between them as tenant and labourer on the one hand, and landlord and employer on the other, little can be learned of the condition of the peasant by knowing the rate of wages for which he contracts. High wages may be named and

\* The term “landholder” does not mean, as in England, the proprietor or holder in fee: in Ireland it means the occupying tenant.

† For the circumstances of this class see “Small Tenantry,” App. F.

‡ For the circumstances of this class see “Cottier Tenants,” App. D.



be passed to the credit of the peasant, but a rent high in comparison with the wages may be placed to his debit; and thus he may only be enabled to pay the rent of a piece of ground sufficient for the production of potatoes for the subsistence of his family. One peasant working at sixpence a day may be as well paid as another who receives a shilling a day for his labour, if the employer, in his capacity of landlord, charges a rent for the land proportionate to the rate of wages which he allows. It will generally prove to be the case, that the rent charged to the cottier is in proportion to the rate of his wages,—the rent, like the wages, being nominal. The real or actual gain of the peasant in all cases, is about as much land as will yield food barely sufficient for his family. The rent of a cabin is always one of the charges which the employer has to make against the wages of his cottier. The cabin is generally a hovel 16 or 20 feet square, the walls of which are made of mud, and its roof of a bad thatch. This hovel rarely contains more than one apartment: the thatch, black from smoke, forms the ceiling; and the earth on which it stands constitutes the floor. It is frequently without any chimney, or with one so badly constructed as to be of but little use. The door is a few boards roughly put together, or perhaps a hurdle; and a hole in the wall, a foot or eighteen inches square, occasionally containing a few pieces of glass, constitute the window. The cost of erecting these cabins averages 6*l.* or 7*l.* The annual rent charged to the cottier is 30*s.* or 2*l.*, which is the same sum as the labourers in most parts of England pay for their cottages, which cost 80*l.* or 100*l.* to erect, consist of four rooms, two on the ground floor and two above, are roofed with tiles or slates, are boarded, plastered, have brick chimneys and iron grates, and have out-houses attached to them which cover more ground, and cost more to erect, than the Irish cottier's hovel. The charge made to the cottier for his cabin will give an idea of the manner in which his wages are absorbed. If the cottier refused to accept the cabin at such a rent, his employer would dismiss him. The cottier approximates in the nature of his engagements to the "hind" of Northumberland or Durham. But that such payment in kind is not necessarily disadvantageous to the labourer is clearly proved by the condition of the Northumbrian hinds, who, under that system, are far more comfortable and prosperous than the agricultural labourers in any other part of England.

Wages in the rural districts of Ireland may almost be said not to exist, though from the infinite variety of rates which are cited in the answers to the questions issued by the Poor Commissioners, agricultural employment, as conducted in England, might

be supposed to be very extensive. The inconsistency amongst the various answers is, however, a proof of wages being nominal, and shows the absence of any regular or market rate for labour.

Besides the "small farmers" and the "cottiers," there is a further class of peasantry—the most wretched class in Ireland—those who hold barely sufficient land to produce the food of their families, and who are not employed by the persons under whom they occupy. The situation of this class is extremely painful, as they depend for the means of paying their rents upon casual employment, and upon the extra demand for labour which arises at seed time, turf cutting, at harvest, and during other busy seasons. They migrate to England annually, for the purpose of making, during the harvest, something towards the rent of their con-acre; and their wives and children in the meantime beg about the country. This class, who may be called "*casual labourers*," are sometimes termed "labourers," and sometimes "con-acre-men." \*

Con-acre, or as it is in some parts of Ireland termed, score, quarter, rood and mock ground, is ground hired by the crop, and not by the year; usually for one crop, but occasionally for two or more. The tenant receives the land just in time to prepare it for the seed, and surrenders it as soon as the crop has been secured. It is principally hired for growing potatoes, but occasionally for oats; and in the north of Ireland sometimes, though very rarely, for flax. The terms of the contract vary greatly. Sometimes the person from whom the con-acre is taken engages to manure, to plough, and to cart the crop; frequently he does not undertake to afford any assistance. The price charged for the land of course depends upon the aid which the tenant requires. † This practice is by no means peculiar to Ireland; it is exceedingly common in Cornwall, Devonshire, Somersetshire, and in some of the midland counties of England.

The answers to the questions in the supplement to Appendix D, concerning the average earnings of "cottiers" and "labourers," are calculated greatly to mislead those who are not well acquainted with the system prevalent in Ireland. Most of those answers state the sum which an ordinary labourer will earn during the year, and allude to his holding a piece of land as if it were in addition to his wages; whilst the land is the supposed value, and is given in lieu of the nominal money wages, or at least in lieu of and absorbing a large portion of them. At first sight

\* For the circumstances of this class see "Labourers out of employment," App. A.; also, "Earnings of Labourers," App. D. to Report of Irish Poor Commissioners.

† See "Con-acre," App. F.



there appears to be an inconsistency in the evidence. It states that there is a great surplus of labour, and yet that the labourers seldom hire themselves without receiving some money in addition to diet, though sometimes they accept 1*d.* or 2*d.* It may seem extraordinary that competition does not reduce wages to the mere subsistence of the labourer. Of course, the small farmer would not work for food alone, and the cottier has a regular engagement. The third class of peasantry, "the casual labourers," are the only class who could be expected to work merely for food; but they will not, because their sole object in seeking employment is to obtain the means of paying for their con-acre. If the produce of their con-acre be exhausted, and their earnings are not sufficient to support their wives and children, they must subsist wholly, or in part, by begging. The labourer naturally feels, that if his wife and children must beg, he may as well partake of their collection, as work hard for no better fare. It would be strange if he were willing to work hard for food, which he could obtain without work. He is not driven to the painful degradation of begging his food: his appearance would be rather prejudicial to the success of his wife and children, who usually beg as widows and orphans. His pride is not more wounded by their begging for his food than for their own: if he accept a sum less than sufficient to support his family, he is quite as much degraded as if he reject employment. Vagrancy, in fact, has put a minimum to wages. The reason usually assigned for wages not falling to the mere subsistence of the labourer himself is, that farmers will not consent to give less than the ordinary wages, or at all events, will not accept labour for mere food. It is far more probable that the farmers, knowing the labourers have no motive to work under a certain sum, do not offer less, than that men who are themselves but little above destitution, should be so thoughtful of the interests of others! Whatever may be the mode in which the rent of the peasantry is paid, or their means of subsistence obtained, in one thing they are all equal—none has more than a bare subsistence for himself and his family. If one state be better than another, it is that of the peasant who receives a portion of land sufficient to yield food for his family, as the payment for permanent employment. The farmer of ten acres has apparently the best means, because he has the most land; but then he holds it under a rent which does not entitle him to retain even so much of its produce as is required for his subsistence, and he is therefore constantly in debt to, and under the power of the person of whom he holds.

It must not be supposed that the whole of Ireland is divided into petty holdings of ten or twelve acres. In some

districts there are farms containing many hundred acres each. One farm in the county Meath contains 1,700 Irish, or 2,500 English, acres; another, in King's County, contains 500 Irish, or 800 English, acres; a third, in Galway, contains 1,000 Irish, or 1,700 English, acres. But farms in Ireland above 50 acres are almost always appropriated to grazing, and therefore require scarcely any labour; one or two persons upon each farm being sufficient to look after the herds and flocks. Mayo may be instanced to prove that Ireland is not completely divided into small holdings. In that county there is perhaps a larger body of petty holders than in any other in Ireland, and yet the population and acreage of that county bear the same proportion to each other as do those of Hertfordshire. The same proportions hold between Connaught and Suffolk. The counties in Connaught, and Suffolk, and Hertfordshire, have been selected for comparison, because they are peculiarly free from manufactures.

As it may fairly be said of the Irish peasantry, that every family which has not sufficient land to yield its food has one or more of its members supported by begging, it will easily be conceived that every endeavour is made by the peasantry to obtain small holdings, and that they are not influenced in their biddings by the fertility of the land, or by their ability to pay the rent, but solely by the offer which is the most likely to gain them possession. —The rents which they promise, they are almost invariably incapable of paying; consequently they become indebted to those under whom they hold, almost as soon as they take possession. They give up in the shape of rent the whole produce of the land with the exception of a sufficiency of potatoes for a subsistence; but as this is rarely equal to the promised rent, they constantly have against them an increasing balance. In some cases, the largest quantity of produce which their holdings ever yielded, or which, under their system of tillage, they could in the most favourable seasons be made to yield, would not be equal to the rent bid; consequently, if the peasant fulfilled his engagement with his landlord, which he is rarely able to accomplish, he would till the ground for nothing, and give his landlord a premium for being allowed to till it. On the sea-coast, fishermen, and in the northern counties, those who have looms, frequently pay more in rent than the market value of the whole produce of the land they hold. It might be supposed, that they would be better without land under such circumstances. But fishing might fail during a week or two, and so might the demand for the produce of the loom, when, did they not possess the land upon which their food is grown, they might starve. The full amount of the rent bid,

however, is rarely paid. The peasant remains constantly in debt to his landlord; his miserable possessions—the wretched clothing of himself and of his family, the two or three stools, and the few pieces of crockery, which his wretched hovel contains, would not, if sold, liquidate the standing and generally accumulating debt. The peasantry are mostly a year in arrear, and their excuse for not paying more is destitution. Should the produce of the holding, in any year, be more than usually abundant, or should the peasant by any accident become possessed of any property, his comforts cannot be increased—he cannot indulge in better food, nor in a greater quantity of it. His furniture cannot be increased, neither can his wife or children be better clothed. The acquisition must go to the person under whom he holds. The accidental addition will enable him to reduce his arrear of rent, and thus to defer what must sooner or later happen—ejectment. But this must be the bound of his expectation.

*Galway.* F. 35.—“If I now let it be known that I had a farm of five acres to let, I should have fifty bidders in four-and-twenty hours, and all of them would be ready to promise any rent that might be asked.”—(Mr *Birmingham*.)—The landlord takes on account, whatever portion of the rent the tenant may be able to offer; the remainder he does not remit, but allows to remain over. A remission of a portion of the rent in either plenty or scarce seasons never made as a matter of course; when it does take place it is looked upon as a favour.

The labourer is, from the absence of any other means of subsisting himself and family, thrown upon the hire of land, and the land he must hire at any rate: the payment of the promised rent is an after consideration; he always offers such a rent as leaves him nothing of the produce for his own use but potatoes; his corn being entirely for his landlord's claim.—(Rev. Mr *Hughes*, P. P. and *Parker*.)

*Leitrim.* F. 36 & 37.—So great is the competition for small holdings, that if a farm of five acres were vacant, I really believe that nine out of every ten men in the neighbourhood would bid for it if they thought they had the least chance of getting it; they would be prepared to outbid each other, *ad infinitum*, in order to get possession of the land; *the rent which the people themselves would deem moderate, would not in any case admit of their making use of any other food than potatoes*; there are even many instances in this barony where the occupier cannot feed himself and family off the land he holds. In his anxiety to grow as much oats (his only marketable produce) as will meet the various claims upon him, he devotes so small a space to the cultivation of potatoes that he is obliged to take a portion of con-acre and to pay for it by wages earned at a time when he would have been better employed on his own account.—(Rev. *T. Maguire*, P. P.)—“Where no man,” says Mr *Armstrong*, “can calculate on a sufficiency of employment to procure him even a diet of potatoes, the possessor of land alone is certain that he can raise enough of that article for his consumption, and he will promise anything to obtain it.”—“He must starve or agree to any terms that will procure him a portion of ground, unless he be willing to beg.”—(*Nixon*.)

The labourer has neither a good stitch to his back, nor a good bit in his belly.—(Rev. *T. Maguire*, P. P.)



*Mayo. F. 40.*—If a farm of 10 acres were vacant to morrow you would have from 50 to 100 people looking after it; they would outbid each other to any amount, and promise to pay anything rather than lose it.—(*Theo. Burke.*)

“The labourer here has no means of living but by getting a piece of land: the truth is he has no other chance; and if the portion be very small, he may have it for nothing, and yet get no more than a mere existence; but when a man is miserable in the face of the world, he will promise to pay any rent he is asked.”—(*Kearney.*)—“If a man had any other way of obtaining a livelihood he would not be such a fool as to pay so high a rent.”—(*Rev. Mr Dwyer, P. P.*)

*Sligo. F. 42.*—The competition for small holdings is so great, that the bidder offers a rent which he knows he cannot pay. If there be a man going to emigrate to America, on account of his rent being too high, he can always find a person to give him money for his place, and to promise to pay the high rent besides.—(*Rev. Mr Brennan, P. P.*)—If a farm of 5 or 10 acres were vacant in this barony, there would be 40 or 50 who would make proposals over each other's heads; they would take their chance of paying the rent: all they want is to get into possession of the land.—(*Dodwell.*)

Where there is not employment sufficient for the population the labourer is wholly thrown on the hire of land for a subsistence, and thus, with the alternative of starvation to himself and family, he is compelled to agree to any terms in order to obtain it.—(*Rev. Mr M'Hugh, P. P., and Mr O'Connor.*)—There is no doubt but that he is thus induced to bid a rent which he knows well is out of his power to pay, and is obliged to give up, in the shape of rent, all but a mere existence; he is only anxious to get hold of the land.—(*Mr Richard Yates.*)

*Dublin. F. 45.*—If a farm of 5 or 10 acres becomes vacant, competition induces the bidders to offer any rent, trusting to the chance of the landlord afterwards reducing it. In this statement the witnesses were unanimous.

*Queen's County. F. 59.*—If a farm of 5 or 10 acres were vacant in this barony, full 20 or 30 bidders would appear, and bid almost any rent for it: this is caused by the great scarcity of these small farms, from so many having been thrown together into larger ones.

The landlord usually takes as much of the promised rent as the tenant is able to pay, allowing the remainder to stand over for a time. As already mentioned, the rent is generally allowed to be nearly six months in arrear in the country districts, but near towns only three months. This allowance is made in all years, but more particularly, and in some cases to a greater extent in years of distress.

The absence of other means of living is the cause of the exorbitant rents paid (or rather undertaken to be paid, for in many cases it is utterly impossible for them to pay them) by the small occupiers: one of them holding five acres, who was present when the Assistant Commissioners were inquiring upon this point, stated his own case in illustration of the fact. His rent was so high that he could not pay it, and get even the barest subsistence; he was consequently in debt, and going fast to total ruin: but what was he to do for an existence?

*Wicklow. F. 59.*—The competition for small holdings, as single acres, &c., is so great that the peasant will bid almost any rent to get possession of one of them, and accordingly the rent is always exorbitantly high, especially as those holdings are almost invariably let by small middle-men, who exact as much as they can wring from the unfortunate tenant, the latter undertaking to pay it in the hope of better times, and trusting to his landlord's compassion for a reduction if prices do not improve.

Small tradesmen, dealers, and others very frequently pay more in rent than is produced on the land.

The cottier tenant is never able to retain more than a bare subsistence to himself and family, and sometimes not even that.

The absence of employment throws the labourer upon land as his only means of existence, and thus compels him to submit to any terms in order to obtain it.

*Kerry Truaghanacmy*. F. 63.—Most abatements that are made in rent are only temporary; a great number of farmers are under arrears, and have not had them excused. "Middle-men, in some cases, formerly allowed a hanging gale, and then distressed the tenant by calling it suddenly in; but this has not taken place of late years. Very little arrears of rent have been excused."—(Messrs *Powell* and *Roche*.)—It is said, "Such remission certainly does not take place as a matter of course. The last three years have been very severe on tenants, and have caused them to go still further into arrear than before." "The cottier tenant, from the rent he pays, is not able to retain for himself and family more than a bare subsistence of the poorest kind of food."—(Mr *Twiss*.) "It is my impression that the small farmers are not in more distress than the class above them."—(Mr *Twiss*.)

"Rents are raised from the great competition for land."—(Mr *Miles*, *Roche*.)—They will run great risks to get land, but we do not think they take land without hoping to make the rent of it. Twenty years ago they certainly used to bid rents which they knew they could not pay, but a great alteration has taken place in that respect.—(Messrs *Powell*, *O'Leary*, *Twiss*.)

*Limerick, Conello*. F. 64.—"A labourer is wholly thrown upon the hire of land for his subsistence, and must agree to any terms the farmer demands. The farmer certainly charges as high a rent as possible for land let to a labourer, and the labourer is willing to take it at an extravagant rent, to get with the land a certainty of employment."—(Colonel *Dickson*, Mr *Royal*, &c.)

"He is thus induced to bid a rent which he knows he cannot pay, and must give up everything but an existence." Mr *Brown* says, "They will offer any rent to get a roof over them."

*Coshlea*. F. 65.—A very high rent is always bid for small holdings, "so high that the peasant could seldom pay it except by labour." There are few farms of so small a size as five or 10 acres in this district; but if such a farm was to be let, there would be a great number of bidders, and many of them would offer a rent which the ground could not afford; their great object would be to get possession of the land.

*Waterford, Middlethird*. F. 71.—It is said that, if a farm of five or ten acres were vacant in the barony, "an immense number of competitors would come forward, and they would bid a rent which they knew they could not keep; they would hope to get a reduction, or to keep possession of the land though they could not pay the whole rent."

Almost all the tenants are more or less in arrear, having become so during the late bad years. The landlords are not in the habit of forgiving or remitting those portions of the rent which the tenants are unable to make up; they usually remain over as arrears. The proportion of rent left unpaid varies in each year, and according to the difference of landlords' means and dispositions. It is stated that rents have not generally been lowered, but since times became so bad, landlords have not received their full rents. A small tenant is not often able to retain from the produce of his holding more than a bare subsistence for himself and his family.

The witnesses agree in the statement that the labourer, from the absence of other means of living, being so much thrown on the price of land or con-acre



for subsistence, is induced to bid a rent for it which he knows he cannot pay, and to give up to his landlord everything but a bare subsistence.

*Cavan. F. 73.*—A man bidding for a farm, does not take into account the value of the land at all, he will bid anything that will get it for him.—(Mr. *Walsh.*)

“If a farm of five or ten acres were vacant in this barony, there would be fifty, every man of them, bidding for it.”—(Mr. *Carmichael.*)—It does not, however, follow from this that farming is profitable, the contrary is the case; “farmers are breaking down as fast as they can.” The competition for the tenant-right of a farmer, notwithstanding the high rent, is thus accounted for by Mr. *Carmichael*:—“Ireland is too full; in this part of the country there is no room for the population; and a man will give anything he has, and promise any rent he is asked, in order to get a holding. I have a farm myself which is considered a bargain, and, if I were to depend on its produce to make the rent and taxes, it would not do it for me.” It is usual here to allow a hanging gale, consisting of a half year’s rent; the Assistant Commissioners could hear of but one landlord in the barony who made what they call “English tenants.” In this part of the country no instance was ever heard of a landlord having taken as much of the promised rent as the tenant was able to pay, and excusing or allowing the remainder to stand over. No remission of the rent ever takes place, as a matter of course, either generally in all years, or even in seasons of distress.

The small tenants (and they are the great majority in this barony) live as poorly as labourers.

*Cavan. F. 73.*—From the want of any other means of living the labourer is compelled to obtain, on any terms, a little land which may keep himself employed, and preserve his family from starvation. Under these circumstances, “the labourer takes land at any rent, hoping for some God-send or other; who knows but a good day may come up again?”—(Mr. *Walsh.*)

*Down, Lecale. F. 76.*—With regard to the cause of the peasantry bidding rents above their means of paying, it was said that a mere labourer here gets no land, except a rood for potatoes; but those who do take land give enormous prices for it, because it is now almost the only resource. It is worthy of remark that, since the linen trade, which enabled the small farmers to pay the high rents, has failed, even a greater anxiety prevails to get land; that is, the anxiety to obtain land, even at a high rent, increases, as the means of paying the rent decreases. The farmers now, from all that could be ascertained, gave everything towards the rent, except a bare subsistence.

*Monaghan. F. 77.*—To the question as to what number of bidders would appear if a farm of five or ten acres were vacant in the barony, it was replied, “There would be plenty of bidders; I think there would be fifty.”—(Mr. *Simpson.*)—“I agree in that opinion; they crush themselves by undermining each other.”—(Mr. *Skelton.*)—The labourers have only the land to look to for support. “They have no extraneous means here, so they can only retain very little for their own use.”—(Rev. Mr. *M’Mahon*, p. p.)

*Fermanagh. F. 76.*—If a farm of five or ten acres were vacant in the barony “there would be as many bidders in the barony as acres.”—(Mr. *Black.*)—When a farm is vacant “the question with the bidders is, not what the farm is worth, or what he could reasonably pay for it, but what offer would be likely to get it from the landlord or agent.”—(Mr. *Lindsey.*)

Mr. *Copeland* said, “To my knowledge, the entire body of the small tenants of this district are in debt, at least to the amount of one year’s rent.” Being asked what particular reason he had for coming to that conclusion, he replied, “I know it well; they come to me for provisions on credit regularly every summer, and that gives me an insight into their means.”

From the absence of other means of living, the labourer is almost wholly thrown upon the hire of land for an existence, and thus compelled to agree to any terms in order to obtain it.

*Tyrone. F. 78.*—If a farm of 5 or 10 acres were vacant there would be a great many applications. “From 10 to 15 persons applied to me for a farm from my brother.”—(Rev. Mr *Stuck.*)—“They offer more than they can pay in most instances: they would offer anything to get the holding.”—(Mr *Buchannan.*)—In small farms they could never pay the rent out of the produce; they make it up by weaving, or by some other kind of industry.—(Mr *Blaney.*)—There are many small farmers who don’t eat a bit of their own butter from year’s end to year’s end.—(Mr *Buchannan.*)—“When land is out of lease the landlords now send out their valuator, and he fixes the rent.”—(Rev. Mr *Stuck.*)—“There is no such thing as one man taking land over another man’s head.”—(Mr *Grugan.*)—“If a man is not able to pay the rent he must go out; but, until he was out, another would not like to bid for his land.”—(Mr *Rogers.*)—The hanging gale varies on different estates, but it never exceeds half a year’s rent.

An instance of the utter ignorance even of the better class of Englishmen, relative to the state of Irish society, lately occurred in the House of Commons. I allude to it, not as being a singular instance, but as being of such recent date as to be upon every one’s mind. An Irish landlord was accused of having ejected a large body of tenantry, who were stated to be, in consequence, reduced to the greatest distress; that is, forced to become mendicants, or to starve. In answer to the charge, it was alleged that all the persons ejected were greatly in arrear, and a list of sums due from the several parties was read to the house. If, being in arrear be sufficient reason for ejecting a tenant, the whole peasantry of Ireland might be ejected at this or any other moment. The answer, however, satisfied the house, because the British members did not understand the question. In England it would be sufficient ground for ejectment, that a tenant was behind-hand in his payments to the amount of two or three years’ rent; because in England the rent is always in proportion to the power of the tenantry to pay: but in Ireland the rent is always beyond the power of the tenant, and he is consequently in debt before he fairly enters upon his holding. If the point had been thus put to the house, the feeling would have been different:—A peasant, under the penalty of vagrancy or starvation, having been compelled to bid a rent for some land which it was impossible for the whole produce to meet, gets into arrear. The tenant has given up to the person under whom he holds every thing but a scanty allowance of potatoes for his family, has lived in a wretched hovel, and has, with his family, gone nearly naked, both by day and by night, in the endeavour to pay the rent which he has promised. The person from whom he has taken the land, having determined to eject him, says, “I will excuse you the 80*l.* or 100*l.* which you owe me as arrear of rent.”

The 80%. or 100%. is, however, really the excess of rent over the value of the whole produce of the land whilst the peasant held it. The person under whom he held, however, lays claim to great liberality in relinquishing his claim to this sum, which he knew never could be paid, and calls the tenant "ill advised" because he is afraid of starvation, or is unwilling to take a bag upon his back and beg potatoes from door to door—from one end of Ireland to the other.

This would be a true statement of ninety-nine out of every hundred cases of ejectment and remission of rent. I know not the facts of the particular instance, but had the British Members of the House of Commons understood the state of Ireland they would have received the explanation with caution. They cannot, however, be blamed for not understanding a state of society as little like that of Great Britain as the state of Hindostan.

This case has attracted much notice, because the numbers ejected were great, and the assigned cause of ejectment was religious and political feeling. But similar cases are of daily occurrence, and have been so time out of mind, and will be so for evermore, unless steps are taken to change the relative position of the peasant and his employer. Ejectment of the peasantry is in the power of every person in Ireland from whom they hold their lands, and is freely exercised to satisfy every variety of feeling. Protestants, Catholics, and every other sect, equally use it towards those of their own, as towards those of other sects; and it is equally resorted to by Tories, Whigs, and Radicals. It is useless to blame those who have the power for exercising it; the arbitrary use of the power we possess is common to us all. The system, and the system alone, is to blame.

*County Carlow.*—Patrick Byrne, being asked the cause of his downfall, states, "My first 'take' was 1*l.* 8*s.* per acre, and when my lease was out, my landlord raised my second take to 2*l.* 5*s.* 6*d.*; I should either promise to pay it or quit at once. As I was loath to leave the place I was born and reared in, I strove to stay and keep the roof over my poor mother's head; however, with all our industry and hard work, what was not in the land could not be taken out of it; we could not pay the rent, so of course we were put out. The old woman, however, went to the landlord, and told him he got all the produce that came off the land; that he knew very well he got the very corn, after it was cut, drawn away by his own carts and horses; that the cows we reared went to pay the rent; all would not do; and the only answer she got was, that the ground was his, and the money hers, and as she could not pay the rent he fixed on it, she should go somewhere else. She is now 70 years of age, sir, and it is hard to see her depending on my labour, particularly when I can scarcely get any."



In England the occupier of land mostly holds directly under the proprietor in fee, and therefore the term "landlord" might generally be used; but in Ireland a very considerable portion of the land held by the peasantry has an intermediate tenant, or as he is called in Ireland, a middle-man, and the landlord or proprietor in fee of the property has not the slightest power to interfere with those who occupy his land.

From ignorance of this circumstance much odium has in England been unjustly cast upon individuals who own the fee of lands in Ireland, for harshness to the tenantry on estates. The tenantry on the estates of Lord A. or Mr B., having been ejected and cruelly treated, it is immediately supposed in England that Lord A. or Mr B. is to blame, though they have not the power to eject or retain the tenantry. Many proprietors, whose immediate tenants are among the most comfortable in Ireland have been accused of cruelty and oppression, solely in consequence of the conduct of their middle-men, over whom they had no legal and no moral influence. Frequently, when part of the occupiers hold under middle-men, and part under the proprietor in fee, the proprietor in fee is seriously injured by the wretched tenantry, over whose circumstances he has no control, living upon those who, as holding directly from him, he has been able to make more comfortable. On the other hand, a most unfair imputation has been cast upon all intermediate tenants in Ireland, under the head of "middle-men," as oppressors of the peasantry. There are two classes of middle-men in Ireland, those who hold on lives renewable for ever, and those who hold under terminable leases. The first of these are in the position of copyholders in England, and possess a more beneficial interest than the proprietor in fee; the other class possess a more or less beneficial interest in proportion to the unexpired term of their leases. There are middle-men in Ireland, of both classes, as kind to their tenantry as those who possess the fee. To cast blame, therefore, upon the proprietor in fee, or upon any of the middle-men, unless the tenantry hold directly under them, is most unjust. There are sub-landlords or middle-men in England, but no one cares whether he holds under the first or under the tenth landlord.

F. A remarkable instance of the various interests possessed in the same estate was detailed respecting a large piece of land in this barony. The proprietor in fee is Alderman Harty, who purchased from an individual in whose favour it had been confiscated after the battle of Aughrim, in the revolution of 1688. Alderman Harty receives 9d. an acre from Major Warburton, the first lessee; Mr Handy pays, under an old lease, 2s 6d. an acre to Major Warburton; John North holds under Mr Handy and pays 6s. an acre; John North has sublet to several small tenants, and receives from them on

an average of 1*l.* 7*s.* an acre. The above particulars were read aloud to the meeting, and it was replied they were correct.

The following statements, made by the medical attendants of the dispensaries and infirmaries in Ireland, when questioned as to the nature and causes of prevailing diseases, sufficiently attest the smallness of the means which the peasantry retain to themselves:—

*County Rothscommon, Strokestown Dispensary, B. Part II.*—The medical attendant having resided some time in England, was able to compare the state of the poorer classes in the two countries, and he was decidedly of opinion that the amount of disease among the lower Irish is much greater than among the same order of English. This difference he was disposed to attribute to the food and to the destitute and neglected state of the Irish in his district; they are scantily fed, have scarcely any clothing or bedding, and too often very imperfect shelter from the ruinous state of their cabins.

*County Roscommon, Tarmonberry Dispensary.*—Dr Shauly gives a most melancholy picture of the great and general destitution which prevails in this part of the country and at Strokestown, where he resides, and his description would apply but too well to all the eastern and southern parts of Roscommon which we have as yet visited; he says that he has often been called to cabins where he has found four and even seven children with their mother, labouring under fever, lying on a little dirty straw, and with one old blanket for covering amongst them, no light in the hovel, and obliged to beg the loan of a white candle (a luxury they cannot afford) for the doctor to examine them.

A large proportion of the pectoral complaints and rheumatic affections under which the peasantry labour in this district may be ascribed to the insufficient shelter afforded by the wretched mud hovels in which they reside, and in which the entire family reposes indiscriminately on the damp floor.

*County Roscommon Infirmary.*—The constant use of potatoes without any admixture of other and better food, without any flesh meat, and even without milk, necessarily produces a debilitated habit of body. Mr Flanagan said that in some places the poor were not without milk, but it was admitted that they were so for the most part; even to such a degree, according to Mr Lysaght, that children continue at the breast for three or four years, to the great injury of the mother. Stomach and bowel complaints are frequent consequences of bad potatoes, and even when disease is averted, relapses are common from the use of no better food. We may sum up the chief causes of disease in bad clothing, dirty, ill-ventilated, and smoky habitations, and a want of every kind of bedding; want of sustenance has been known in some instances to produce disease.

*County Wicklow, Carnew Dispensary.*—The medical attendant of the dispensary stated that the “use of potatoes, as the only article of diet among the poor, is the origin of the frequent bowel and stomach complaints to which they are generally liable.” He adds, that “their condition as to clothes, furniture, and bedding, and indeed as to every thing called comforts, is miserable and wretched in the extreme. In many instances,” continues the same witness, “I have found that persons to whose assistance I have been summoned, under the idea that they were labouring under some determinate disease, have in reality been suffering from destitution. In such cases, food of a proper quality would have been of infinitely greater service than any medicine whatever.”

*County Down, Ballycarrew Dispensary.*—It was considered that the want of sufficient food was often the cause of actual disease in the district.



*County Down, Castlewellan Dispensary.*—The principal causes of disease were stated to be bad food, bad lodging and clothing, and intemperance.

Should not these statements be sufficiently convincing, under the several heads of food, clothing, fuel, and cabins, contained in the Appendix D. of the Irish Poor Report, a minute description will be found of the domestic miseries of the Irish peasantry. To give a correct idea of their condition to those who have never been out of England would be impossible. There are an infinity of circumstances, forming an aggregate of wretchedness which does not exist in this country. A deserted hovel could here and there be found which had been used by a pig or a cow, but then all around it would bear the marks of prosperity. In Ireland there are villages of hovels, with every surrounding object in keeping. Every thing in that unfortunate country presents the appearance of recklessness, as every thing in England presents the appearance of neatness and of care. The Irish peasant has found, by a bitter experience, that care and frugality meet with no reward in his own country.

— D. 74.—Men grow careless about themselves and their houses when they feel that they cannot be worse off than they are. “Many a man must lie in bed to have his only shirt washed; and some cannot afford to buy soap.”—(*Lally.*)—“Some cabins are kept clean enough; for the floor is easily swept, and there is little besides to sweep or wash.”—(*Byrne.*)—“There is such a thing as a man not having the heart to care how things look with him when he knows he is coming to nothing: the cries and distress of a man’s children weigh on his spirit sore.”—(*Ward.*)—“Habit, I believe, is the chief obstacle to improvements of this kind.”—(*Rev. Mr Martin.*)—“There are perceptible improvements where there is education, but poverty must always tend to produce slovenly habits; and it is to be deeply regretted that the peasant seldom looks beyond potatoes and milk.”—(*Mr Ward.*)—“It would be well for us if we all could get even that.”—(*Ward.*)—“I admit indeed, that there would be little use in their looking beyond the potatoes and milk, as they need not look for what they could not find.”—(*Mr Ward.*)

*Down.*—“It is hard,” says a cottier tenant, “for a man who is over head and ears in debt to be industrious, he knows not what to look to.”

I have observed that the recklessness of the peasantry extends to the better classes, as in England the steady and regular habits of the lower and middling classes are distinguishable in the higher. In Ireland it may be said, that men of business have the habits of men of pleasure; whilst in England men who have not any fixed occupation, who may be termed men of pleasure, have, even in the exercise of their dissipations, the punctual and methodical habits of men of business.

We must not wonder that the peasant, to gain even the wretched position of a tenant, labours hard and makes boundless promises. Neither ought we to wonder at his utter want of all calculation. The alternative before him is debt or starvation, and we may be

confident that he prefers the former. The dread of starvation renders it impossible for him to hesitate. He knows he cannot pay his rent—he knows that he will be unable to gain a steady and comfortable subsistence for his family—he knows that he can save nothing for times of sickness and old age. He is driven to be regardless of all these considerations. He promises to pay, well knowing that performance is impossible. If he do not promise, he must starve.

*Galway, Par. Kilcreest.* A. 358.—Michael Mahon, a small farmer, says, must I not to-morrow, if turned out of my holding, go to beg? though I can live very middling as long as I am left in it.

*County Mayo, Parish of Barrishoole.* A. 498.—John Garovan last year held land, but being unable to pay his rent, was ejected; is a good labourer, and would gladly work if he got employment; his wife is dead, and he now begs himself with three young children; the eldest carries the bag, and he carries the youngest.

Pat O'Connor did hold land, but was unable to pay his rent; is now a labourer; his wife and three children beg through the *Summer*.

*County Mayo, Parish of Cong.* A. 500.—Pat Carty lost his land; has his wife and mother-in-law living with him; he is able to work any day he gets work, but that is not often; the mother-in-law begs, and divides with them; he does not beg at home, but they all sometimes set off for the county Galway.

It was also stated that beggars, almost without exception, consist of persons who have once earned their own livelihood, but have been reduced by the death of parent and husband, by old age disabling them for work, or by the loss of their farms. The Rev. Mr Hulden would particularly insist on the latter cause, but as one leading less immediately to public than to private beggary.

Butler agrees with him and says, this is November day, our whole village has been served with a notice to quit; I am just going to see who will be left in their houses, and of the 24 families I fear not many will light a fire on their hearth again.

The assistant Commissioners, in a note to this paragraph, say they subsequently heard that the threat against Butler's Village was not executed; but we have retained the expression he used, when he dreaded it, as exhibiting more forcibly, by the depth of feeling it betrays, the poor man's own sense of the utter destitution consequent on the loss of his land in a country where labour affords him no refuge, than any detailed and measured statement we could make of its results.

*Mayo, Parish of Kilgeever.* A. 504.—The witnesses, speaking of vagrants, say, they have all at one time or other earned their own subsistence. The causes that led to their destitution, as mentioned by the witnesses, are, orphan-age, widowhood, sickness of the principal earner of the family, ejection for arrears of rent, high rents, and low prices.

*Mayo, Parish Kilimore.* A. 506.—Captain Nugent and the other witnesses agree with Mr Lyons, that the number of such beggars has considerably increased. Donohoe says it is greatly increased; what has become of all that have been ejected in the last two years? they are nearly all begging money in the way described.

*Mayo, Parish Murrisk.*—If a man lose his ground in this Barony, he may as well take the bag at once.—(*Luddane.*)

*County Dublin, Balrothery.* F.—Speaking of those who have been ejected,

the witnesses say they have suffered great privation in every way, want of food, shelter, and fuel, sickness, and all the other miseries of extreme poverty, to which houseless and pennyless wanderers could be subject.

*County Carlow, Parish Carlow.* A.—Those who contend for the increase of vagrancies attribute it to the policy of landlords consolidating their small farms. One of the witnesses states his knowledge of two or three families thus circumstanced in town. One in particular, who had a good farm and was well off, now in a state of the greatest poverty, and must beg in a few days.

*County Carlow, Parish Dunleckny.* A. 540.—Rev. John Phelan says, “I recollect in one instance of ten or eleven families who were driven off one town-land, three or four persons perished in most melancholy destitution. A few of the dispossessed families erected temporary huts in the dyke of the road opposite the land from which they were removed, by placing a few sticks covered with straw and potatoe stalks, as a shield against the trials of the weather, but the rain flowed in; and some who had not strength to bear up against the trials they had to encounter, sunk beneath them.”

*Kilkenny.* F. 91.—Of those who have at different times been ejected the witnesses are unable to give any general account, or to say what has become of them. “Some have fixed themselves in the outskirts of towns, and endeavour to subsist by occasional hire and by taking con acre; others have left this part of the country altogether; and I heard of a few becoming mendicants.”—(Mr M’Henry.)

*King’s Co.* F. 93.—Mr Ridgway said, “that when tenants were ejected, very few gentlemen gave them settlements; they were mostly thrown on the world.”

*Louth.* F. 95.—Many of them houseless wanderers dispersed over the whole country and neighbouring towns, wherever they could find a temporary shelter. As a proof of the wretchedness to which these unfortunate persons were frequently reduced, the following circumstances were related by one of the witnesses, a gentleman of high respectability and standing, who was one of the committee of the Mendicity Society established at Dundalk in 1827. Great distress existed in the town at that time, and in the course of their visits to inquire into the state of the poor, the committee found in one street alone, sixty individuals who had been ejected from an adjoining estate in the month of May before; they were in the greatest want and destitution.

*Meath Bar: Kells.* F. 98.—Those who remained at home, except in a few cases where they were constantly employed by the proprietors, suffered the greatest privations from poverty and want of employment, as has been already described in the instances quoted above; those who have gone to settle on bogs are generally most miserable, except a few who are situated near towns, and who have a little money and a horse and cart, and can afford to hire bog ground and to live while they are cutting and drying the turf, which they afterwards convey to, and sell in the town for fuel: it is utterly impossible for the peasantry to lay by any savings to meet such occurrences.

*Bar: Mayfenragh.* F. 100.—“A few of the ejected tenantry have emigrated, but most of them have dispersed through the country, and have become labourers, and are located in the neighbourhood of towns and on bogs; others have become beggars, and have died from grief and hardship.”—(Rev. Mr Tuite, P. P., and others.)—As already described, these ejected tenantry are subjected to great privations. Rev. Mr Tuite, P. P. has had thirteen ejected families begging through his parish at one time, and lying houseless on the road side. The witnesses cannot state to what extent those who have settled on bogs have thriven. The peasantry cannot be expected to save and lay up a provision against the possibility of ejection.



*Queen's Co : Bar : Maryborough.* F. 102.—Many of the ejected tenants who sought refuge in Maryborough have fallen into great distress and poverty since they came there.—(Mr *Martin*, *James Sinnot*, *E. Cullen*.)

*Wicklow.* F. 106.—Most of the tenants ejected in this barony have undergone great privations of every description. One of them, who previously held twenty-five acres of land, took a cabin and two acres of barren mountain, near Baltinglass, working also as a labourer. The change of fortune and of habits, and the extreme poverty he fell into, so affected him, that he died of grief, exhaustion, and want, two years afterwards, while working as a labourer at a new road; his family have been since his death, and are now, in the greatest misery. (This case was known to almost all the witnesses present, as it occurred close to the town, and created a great sensation in the neighbourhood.) *Michael Dempsey* stated that two other small farmers, who had been ejected from their holdings, came to reside in the town and became labourers; both fell into great distress, and the wife of one of them died from fretting and want, within a few months. He has known their families to be frequently reduced to one meal a day, and had he not given them food they must have died from absolute starvation. There were many others in and near the town, and disposed on the mountains in the barony, who had suffered and were now suffering great hardship and privations.

*Clare.* F. 108.—Those from Kilfalboy parish have been dispersed through the country; they have all "*gone to the bad*;" a good many of them, it was added, "took new little pieces of land on the mountains from other landlords."—(*Carroll*, *Slattery*, *Hayley*, *Moriarty*.)

*Tipperary.* F. 118.—Mr *Fitzgerald* says, "A considerable proportion of the pauper population of the towns in this barony consists of persons who have been at some time dispossessed of land. They must suffer much certainly, but they are soon lost sight of."

*Waterford.* F.—For some months they were living in the ditches in the neighbourhood, and suffering severely from both hunger and cold.

*Cavan.* F. 125.—"Some of the tenantry who were ejected, went among their friends and became labourers; some went to America, and not a few to beg."—(Rev. Mr *Brady*, p. p.)—The peasantry have no possible means of providing against any contingencies, such as ejection, &c., under present arrangements; the thing is utterly impossible.—(Rev. Mr *Brady*, p. p.)

To this vital importance of land to the peasantry of Ireland, most of the evils which afflict society in that country may be distinctly traced. *Some arise directly* from the endeavour to obtain land; but *the majority arise indirectly*, as the offsprings of the system of "nominal rents;" itself the immediate consequence of the competition.

The direct effect of the importance of land to the peasantry, is a general combination, in defiance of the laws, to prevent ejection from their holdings; from which it may be said, without the fear of contradiction, that nine-tenths of the violence to person, and of the destruction to property, in Ireland proceeds. To be convinced of this it is only necessary to watch the assigned cause for the various atrocities which are related in the English papers. So strictly is it the fact, that if a law could be passed capable of preventing exorbitant rents, and consequent ejection, from holdings under ten acres, the Irish people would form one of the most peaceful communities in Europe. Outrage

upon person and upon property would be almost unknown amongst them. When the crimes committed in Ireland are enumerated, and the motives which lead to them are suppressed, the peasantry appear to be actuated by the most savage feelings. But when the motives for their committal, and the mode of effecting these outrages, are considered, they appear rather as cool and deliberate punishments inflicted by a community upon those who had offended against the general laws of that community;—laws enacted not by the legislature, but by a still more powerful lawgiver—public opinion. Putting to death is not necessarily murder: no one says that an executioner has murdered those whom he has put to death. Beating a man is not necessarily a crime: no one says that the drummer of a regiment who has flogged a hundred men has committed a hundred crimes. It is very important, therefore, when we learn that a man has put another to death, or has beaten him severely, to know whether he has done so from personal malice, or whether he has been the mere instrument for giving effect to the decision of the community.

So systematic and free from personal feeling are the outrages in Ireland, as to want but the formal trial in order to give the whole proceeding the character of a legal punishment. It appears as though the legislature had omitted to provide for the wants of society in one particular, and that society had privately filled up the omission.

The principal portion of the crimes committed in the rural districts in Ireland have these remarkable features:—

First, That they are rarely committed by the aggrieved party; but most frequently by persons who come from a distance, and to whom the individual or the property to be injured was previously unknown.

Secondly, That these crimes receive the sanction not only of the aggrieved party, but of the whole of the peasantry in the neighbourhood in which they are perpetrated, and in every other part of Ireland.

Thirdly, That this sanction is only extended to crimes against individuals who have taken lands, from which others have been ejected; against the person who served notice of ejectment, who has ejected, or has distrained for rent, and upon the keeper in charge of the holding. The crimes appear to be shooting the individual, burning his property, maiming and destroying his cattle, and forcibly retaking the lands.

Although the trial in each case does not become public, there is every reason to believe that a council is in every instance held before the committal of an outrage, and that the species of out-



rage is determined by the council, after weighing the circumstances which have excited the displeasure of the peasantry of the neighbourhood. Notice is then sent to some distant fraternity, with the signs by which those who are chosen to commit the crime can make themselves known to the council, in order that the person or the property destined for injury may be pointed out. These councils are known by the titles of riband-societies, whitefeet, blackfeet, whiteboys, and by a variety of others, which change with place and with time. Many of these societies originated in private or party squabbles, but seem quickly to have espoused the great grievance, but for which they would have expired nearly as soon as they were created.

*Galway.* F. 80.—“People will not acknowledge that they have been deterred by threats, but I suspect such has been the case to some degree.”—(Mr *Comyn*.)

*Sligo.* D. 14.—The Rev. Mr *Yates* said, “He was afraid constant employment would not in Ireland be productive of the benefits which might fairly be expected from it: in the immediate neighbourhood of Sir R. G. Booth’s residence there was as much employment given as anywhere, and yet threatening notices were of frequent occurrence there; and no later than this last spring a large stack of corn was burnt, and several ploughs maliciously broken.” Young *Shaw* replied, “You forget, Mr *Yates*, that the real reason of those outrages was that the poor people were unhinged, and driven out of their lands and dwellings at Ballygilligan; and that, besides, they are by no means constantly employed; they still consider themselves aggrieved.”

*Sligo.* F. 42.—A considerable proportion of the crimes committed in this barony is connected directly or indirectly with the taking of land; every opposition is made to any change in the arrangement of lands in Sir R. G. Booth’s domain. A stack of wheat was lately burned, and several ploughs and other implements broken to pieces.—(Mr *Dodwell*.)—John *Logan* exclaims, “No wonder when you turned 120 people out of their lands at Balligilligan.”—Mr *Dodwell* continues, “Taylor was a tenant in arrear, and we gave him notice to quit; Lindsay, his brother-in-law, came to me and paid up the arrear. As Sir R. G. Booth does not permit of sub-division, Lindsay asked permission to occupy a portion of Taylor’s land, that in that manner he might pay himself in part for the money advanced on account of the latter. He obtained leave to do so, and put a horse and some cows on the land; his relations would not allow this, and they accordingly cut his horse’s throat.” The destitution apprehended, or really brought on, is the cause of the crime.—(Mr *Lumey*.)—There is no reason to fear that any privations short of perfect destitution would urge the cottier to crime; it would at least require that utter destitution was approaching.—(Messrs *Yates* and *Dodwell*.)—Rents have not been in the least affected by intimidation on the part of the peasantry; they have never combined with a view to lower rents.—(Sir *A. Creighton*, Bart.)

The committal of outrages is sanctioned by the mass of agricultural working people, as is proved by the difficulty, amounting to an impossibility, of discovering the authors of the crimes.—(Mr *Richard Yates*.)

*Leitrim.* F. 37.—It has been already mentioned that the design of Mr Lane Fox for the more judicious arrangement of farms on his estate, were opposed by the tenantry concerned to the utmost of their power. “The fact is,” remarks Rev. *T. Maguire*, P. P. “they naturally looked with sus-

picion on any measure which tended in the least to interfere with their only means of livelihood; they feared that they would be left destitute, and that was the cause of their violence." Though perfect destitution was not the result, they were urged to crime by their privations; many participated in the threats of violence, although they were assured that it was intended to provide them with a certain amount of employment.—(*Kell and O'Donnell*.)

There was reason to think that many persons from Sligo, fearing, perhaps, that similar measures might be extended to their part of the country, took part in the disturbances alluded to.—(*Nixon*.)—The intimidation, however, to which the peasantry resorted, was of no avail; the new arrangements were effected at the point of the bayonet.—(*Rev. T. Maguire, P. P.*)—"Not at the point of the bayonet, Mr Maguire."—(*Kell*)—"When I say at the point of the bayonet, I mean that the thing was done by the assistance of numbers of soldiers and police."—(*Rev. T. Maguire, P. P.*)

*Leitrim. F. 39.*—"I should think that if any general clearance were attempted (a thing that has never been done here), means would be taken to deter any person from availing himself of any land thus vacated; it could not be otherwise where the people know that, at least at present, they have no other certain means of obtaining even the commonest food than by the occupation of land."—(*Mr Norris and O'Brien*.)

*Dublin. F. 44.*—Cases have sometimes occurred where outrage, connected with the taking of land, has been sanctioned by the mass of the working people, and committed by persons who have not themselves been sufferers from the supposed injury. This has been when the act sought to be revenged was of an aggravated nature, and considered as an act of aggression against a whole class of persons, and therefore taken up by all as a matter in which every man of that class was equally interested; such cases, however, appear to have been very rare.

*Meath. F. 52.*—There are very few crimes committed here at all, but those few have usually been directly or indirectly connected with the taking of lands, the payment of tithes, or other charges affecting land, but especially with the taking of land over the heads of others. The crimes have been produced by feelings exasperated by privations; they have generally been committed by strangers who are not known, and, of course, are the most likely to escape detection and punishment.

*Kilkenny Bar: Galmoy, F. 45.*—"Some years ago a system of outrage connected with the taking of land was universally prevalent, in addition to general disturbance resulting from the tithe system."—"The barony has, however, been quite peaceable for some years, and the cessation of outrage corresponded precisely with the cessation of the exaction of tithe."—"It was impossible that people would be quiet when such things occurred, as that a woman's cloak has been stripped from her back on her way to mass for tithe due to the clergyman."—(*Captain Delany*.)

"The perpetrators were usually persons who had been reduced to destitution, and were prompted to crime by revenge or despair."—(*Mr J. Cahill*.)—"The peasantry are now quiet from a persuasion that the Government have come to the determination of investigating the causes of their distress.—(*Messrs Murphy, Delany, and Rev. Dr Brennan, P.P.*)—"The more serious crimes were usually committed by persons brought from a distance, and even hired for the purpose."—(*Mr Coyne*.)—None of the witnesses have any reason to suppose that any persons above the small landholder have been the instigators to these outrages with a view to protect themselves from ejection. Rents were not so much aimed at by them as the inclination to select tenants and to get rid of small occupants. So much sanctioned were these outrages by the mass of the agricultural people, that they always manifested joy when they heard of them."—(*Captain Delany and Mr Cahill*.)

*Kilkenney Bar: Gowran.* F. 46.—Mr *Flood* states, “It is my opinion that almost all the outrages committed in this district are, or have been, connected with tithes or the taking of land; speaking as a magistrate, very few cases of ordinary felony come under my observation.”

The following list of outrages connected with the taking of land, was furnished by the chief constable of police in this town (Thomastown). The crimes result, in great part, either from absolute destitution caused by the loss of land, or from the fear of it.

On the 20th of September 1832, at night, the houses of Richard Browne and James Conway, of Kilcarr, were attacked by an armed party, about 10 in number, who swore them to give up their houses and land.

22nd November 1832.—An armed party visited the houses of James Dinneef and Widow Dullard, of Killarney, and ordered them to give up their land, and beat Dinneef severely.

3rd December 1832.—The house of Edward Murphy, of Kilmurphy, was attacked by an armed party, about 20 in number, who beat him severely, and swore him to give up his farm.

5th January 1833.—A threatening notice was served on Mr Hutchinson, of Killiney, stating that his days were but few if he did not give up his farm.

8th January 1833.—On this night a man named Edward Murphy was attacked, fired at, and severely wounded by two men on the road at Kiljames near Thomastown, in consequence of having taken a farm.

15th January 1833.—A man named Richard Holehan, of Catheralsrath, was served with a threatening notice, ordering him to give up his land.

22nd January 1833.—At night, the house of a man named Michael Sullivan, of Annamult, was attacked by an armed party, who beat him severely and ordered him to give up a farm of three acres.

22nd January 1833.—At night, the houses of Michael Phelan and Cormack Fielding, of Annamult, were attacked by an armed party, who ordered them not to sleep another night in their houses; that if they did they would murder them.

22nd January 1833.—At night, the house of James Hickey, of Annamult, was attacked by an armed party, who beat him severely and ordered him to give up three acres of land.

22nd January 1833.—At night, the house of Dennis Dunn, of Ennisnagg, was attacked by an armed party, in consequence of his having taken land.

14th February 1833.—At night, the house of John Gorman, of Kilmanahan, was attacked by an armed party, who swore him to give up some land.

27th February 1833.—At night, an armed party attacked the house of James Clooney, of Barretstown, and ordered him to divide his land into lots.

5th March 1833.—At night, an armed party attacked the house of Edward Hanrahan, of Stonecarty, and threatened him with death, if he did not give up his land.

27th March 1833.—Two men, armed with pistols, came to the house of James Cummerford, of Rossboultry, and ordered him to tell John Casee and Edward Walsh to give up their farms.

20th March 1833.—At night, the houses of John Galven and James Conway, of Ruppah, were attacked by an armed party, who ordered them to give up their farms.

“So general is this system of violence connected with land, that even the landlord cannot, in some instances, enter into possession of his own lands.”—(Rev. Mr *Irwin*.)—It often comes out on trials, that both those interested and those not interested, in the act sought to be avenged, have equally par-



ticipated in the crime.—(Mr *Flood*.)—It is not known that persons much above the small landholders have instigated the peasantry to those outrages.

The persons concerned in them do not seem to direct their attention so much to the lowering of rents, as to preventing the free disposal of land in the way of changing tenants.—(Mr *Splint*.)

The committal of them is undoubtedly approved of by the labouring portion of the agricultural population as necessary to protect their general interest.

*King's Co* : F. 49.—Many of the crimes committed in the neighbourhood are connected with the taking of land ; and Mr *Odlum* states that “there is a feeling among the people that no man has a right to come in on the land of another.” He adds “that he considers destitution to be the cause of this feeling, and a soreness arising out of what they conceive unjust dealing on the part of the landlords : thus, for instance, when a man is put out, and his successor gets the land at a lower rate than it was set for before, the tenant who has been ejected thinks that he should have got a trial at the lowered rent.” It was stated that in many cases the ejected tenant suffers extremely, and that there is a very general feeling in favour of those dispossessed ; but Mr *Kennedy* observes that, in general, when a crime is committed, it is some person connected with the dispossessed family who perpetrates it. He mentioned the following case as having occurred a few years since : “A farmer hired a soldier to shoot a man who took his farm ; the soldier did so, and afterwards turned king’s evidence, and the farmer was hanged.” Mr *Odlum* states that there has not been any combination here against rents ; and Mr *Porter* added, “It is not that they will not pay, but they cannot.” To outrages committed about the taking of land the sanction of the agricultural classes is very generally given ; and Mr *Kennedy* says, “There is every opposition given to a new comer, and few would be willing to take land from which a man has been ejected :” upon which Mr *Oldum* observed, “I don’t know that : so great is the anxiety to obtain land that men are willing to run all risks.” This custom of making their own regulations, and uniting to redress their wrongs, was considered very mischievous in its consequences. Mr *Odlum* remarked, “There cannot be a worse custom ; but latterly the country is quiet, and the feeling not so strong.”

*Meath, Mayfenragh*. F. 54.—No considerable proportion of the crime committed in this barony is connected with the taking of land, or the charges affecting land. Serious crimes of this nature have, however, occurred in the neighbouring barony : they have often been committed by persons who were not themselves sufferers from the acts of the individuals whom they injured.

*Wicklow*. F. 59.—No crimes have been committed here during the last eight or ten years, and no very serious offences could be proved to have been in any way connected with the taking of land, the paying of tithes, or other charges affecting land.

Rev. Mr *Lalor*, p. p., thought that even though perfect destitution were not the result of ejectment, yet, if actual ejectment took place, the same bad feeling would still exist among the ejected tenants against those who took their land.

*Queen's Co* : *Bar* : *Maryborough*. F. 55.—A large proportion of the crimes committed in the neighbourhood were formerly connected, directly or indirectly, with the taking of land, the paying of tithes, or other charges affecting land, especially three or four years ago, at which time outrages of this description were very frequent ; but within the last six months the country has been extremely peaceable, more so, indeed, than for fourteen or fifteen years before.—(Mr *Wray*.)



The following list of outrages connected with land was furnished to the Assistant Commissioner by Mr *Wray* from the police books :—

7th February 1829.—A number of armed men attacked the house of the widow M'Daniel, of Ballyknocken, who forced her son-in-law (Robin) to swear that he would have nothing to do with a farm he had lately taken from Major Cassan, from which the former occupant was ejected.

15th March 1829.—On the night of this date a house, the property of a man named Huslain, on the estate of Major Cassan, was maliciously consumed at Lalor's Mill, he having recently taken same together with a farm.

20th March 1829.—On the night of this date the houses of James Sutcliffe, Martin Whelan, and Peter Dunn, near Poorman's Bridge, were attacked by a party of armed men, who swore them to quit their farms in twenty-one days.

12th April 1829.—On this night a house was maliciously burned at Ballycorney, the property of Major Cassan: the farm on which the house stood had been lately taken by new tenants.

4th June 1829.—An armed party attacked the house of Mr Rielly, of Clonboyne, who swore him to quit his farm.

8th December 1829.—An armed party attacked the house of Stephen Hosey, of Capoley, who swore him to quit his land within fifteen days.

23d April 1831.—On this night the house of Mr Thomas Seal, of Clonaddcasey, was attacked by a party of insurgents, who fired a shot through his hall-door, and left a threatening notice, ordering him not to bid for land now out of lease, which was held by him and family for the last seventy years.

18th May 1831.—The dwelling-houses of Mr James Fitzpatrick and Conrahy, of Lalor's Hill, and Finnelly, of Clonadd, were attacked and broken open by a party of Rockites, who swore them to give up their lands.

11th March 1832.—On this evening a party of armed men went to the house of Denis Donoghue, of Meelick, and ordered him to give up his land.

18th March 1832.—On this evening the house of James Mahony, of Clonbar, was attacked and entered by a party of men, who ordered him to give up some land he had in possession for the last ten years; they threatened to burn the house if he would not comply with their orders.

18 April 1832.—On this night the house of Denis Donoghue, of Meelick, was attacked by an armed party, who beat and abused him in a cruel manner, and ordered him to give up three and a half acres of land.

4th November 1832.—On this night three armed men entered the house of Patrick Geoghegan, of Ballylusk, and ordered him to give up some land he had recently taken.

2d October 1833.—On this night a party of armed men went to the house of Denis Lynch, of Clomack, and ordered him to give up eight acres of land which he had had in his possession for the last six years.

1834.—A Rockite party attacked the dwelling-house of John Clondron, of Clonenagh, broke his windows, and ordered him to quit his place.

8th April 1825.—A man named William Carter was brutally murdered at Upper Ballyfin, near Mountrath, for fencing in some land which he rented from Lord Maryborough, and which land was formerly a commonage.

These crimes and outrages were not generally perpetrated by persons in distressed circumstances, although the cause assigned by those who committed them was to avenge the persons who were ruined or injured by being ejected from their farms, to prevent others from taking them, and to protect the general interests of the poor.—(Mr *Wray*.)—"There certainly have been some cases in which ejected tenants have been driven to such a state of mind, by the total or comparative ruin caused them by being ejected from their land, that they did not care what became of them, and were ready to do

anything; some of the persons convicted of these crimes and outrages were completely destitute, and one of them, who was executed in this town (Maryborough), left his family (a wife and four children) in such distress, that, had not a subscription been raised for them by myself and others, they must literally have starved. This man had previously been in the most wretched state of poverty, and had probably been prevailed upon, in consequence, to participate in the crime for which he suffered.”—(Mr *Wray*.)

No case has been *proved* of persons much above the small landholder having instigated the people to Whiteboyism, &c., with a view to protecting themselves from ejectment; but this has certainly often occurred, and might and ought to have been proved against those persons.—(Mr *Wray*.)

*Queen's Co: Bar: Portmahinch. F. 58.*—This barony has always been more peaceable than most others, and few crimes have occurred. One or two of them, however, have been connected with matters relating to land, and, in several of the adjoining baronies, the number and atrocity of such crimes and outrages were fearfully great, especially a few years ago; but within the last twelvemonth they have much diminished, and the country is now more tranquil than it has been for many years. It is supposed that in general the landholder has been driven into such crimes by the destitution of his family, and in many cases there is no doubt of this being the case. Even though perfect destitution were not the result of ejectment from his farm, it is supposed that in many cases the ejected tenant might still be exasperated to crime from attachment to his little holding, and the deep sense of injustice and oppression, and consequent legitimacy of revenge, which all that class entertain towards the persons who eject them from their land, and if possible still more towards those who take it after they have been ejected. These crimes are not confined to the individual sufferers, but there is a general fellow feeling among small landholders and labourers which induces them to make common cause with those who have been ejected, thinking this necessary to protect their general interests, and to be the only means of putting a stop to ejectments. No instances are known of persons above the class of small landholders instigating the people to such outrages, with a view of protecting themselves from ejectment; but it is suspected by many that some persons of that class have indirectly, or at least tacitly encouraged that system. Among the proofs of the mass of the working people making common cause with the perpetrators of these crimes, may be given that of their never directly or indirectly assisting in apprehending the offender, however atrocious may be the crime committed. Rents, however, remain unaffected by this system of intimidation, for, however strong may be the fear of outrage in those who offer rent, or take land from which another has been ejected, the fear of destitution and starvation is still stronger, and land may be considered as the only means of subsistence.

*Tiperary, Bar. Middlethird. F. 67.*—“It is our opinion that a large proportion of the crimes committed in this neighbourhood, are connected with the competition for land, tithes not having been sought for during the last two years. No outrages have arisen from that source, and we know of no opposition to county rates, which are the only other charges.”—(Messrs *Fitzgerald, Pennefather, Long, Clarke*, Magistrates.)

It is stated that hundreds of instances could be given of threatening notices having been sent to those who had taken land from which others had been ejected; of outrages committed on such persons; and of parties repossessing themselves of ground, and endeavouring to alarm the landlord and force him to take or retain certain tenants.

The following instances are given of crimes arising out of the cases of ejectment, which had taken place within the district of Mr *Fitzgerald*, stipendiary magistrate:—

In November last the house of John Murphy, Esq., of Woodford, was attacked and fired into, and a threatening notice left, because he had taken a farm of which the previous tenant had been dispossessed.

In the same month, the house of William Lynch was fired into, and Mrs Lynch narrowly escaped being shot. The cause of the outrage was the same as in the previous instance.

In the same month a party of armed men appeared on the lands of Ballysheehan, for the purpose of intimidating some men who were employed by Mr John White, of Cashel, agent to Smith Barry, Esq., to work on a farm of which the previous tenant had been dispossessed. In April last an armed party lay in wait to murder Thomas Hogan, who lately took a farm at Drumeleer, near Kilfeacle, of which the previous tenant had been dispossessed. They intended to have murdered him while working on the lands above mentioned.

In May last two shots were fired in the lawn of Mr William Murphy, of Ballynamona, and on the same night, a bull, his property was shot, Mr Murphy was about to take from the Earl of Mountcashel some land, of which the previous tenant had been dispossessed. Subsequently the same gentleman was shot at near his own gate, and five bullets passed through the chaise in which he was travelling.

In June last a burning took place at Ballysheehan, the property of Smith Barry, Esq., supposed to have been committed by a disappointed bidder of a farm, of which the previous tenant had been dispossessed.

Within the present year a farmer, named Woodlock, living near Clonghaleigh or Knockrue, while at work on some land which he had lately taken, and of which the previous tenant had been dispossessed, was attacked by a party of men having their faces blackened, who ordered him to give up the farm.

Near New Inn, a farmer, named Lonergan, almost 80 years of age, was shot dead in his own yard, because he had taken a farm which the former tenant had sold, but which, subsequently, the brother of that tenant wished to get possession of. One man was found guilty of this murder, and the son of the deceased compromised the murder with the remainder.

A conspiracy was formed by six men to shoot Dr Fitzgerald, the stipendiary magistrate, when going to the assize town, because he was to superintend a prosecution against a man named Burke, charged with a murder arising from the dispossessing some tenants of land.

Some of the same gang conspired to shoot Mr Daniel Mansergh, because he took a farm which the former tenant had surrendered, and which one of this gang wanted to take. Mr Mansergh was only saved by riding fast and getting before the party on the road; his farm-house and carts were subsequently burned on the same farm.

The same gang lay in wait to shoot Mr John White, agent to Smith Barry, Esq., because ejectments had been served on the tenants; and Mr White's life was saved by his returning another road.

On another occasion the same gang agreed to shoot one Edmund Russell, because he was a Crown witness against a man named Brien, charged with the murder of John Bibby; the murder arose out of ejectments from land; the father of Bibby was murdered on the same night with himself. On the 4th of October last, a fellow armed with a blunderbuss lay in wait to shoot Mr Price because he distrained some tenants for rent. Last autumn Mr Hunt, agent to the Kilfeacle property, when going to distrain for rent, was driven off by the appearance of a large party of men who had collected to resist him. In June 1834, Lord Mountcashel ejected several tenants at Rose Green, and several of them re-entered and took forcible possession. At Clonhaleigh Mr Cooke ejected a tenant, and set the farm to a man named Walsh; on various occasions since (*both by day and by night*) armed parties have made attacks on



the house, firing shots and destroying the fences, and, at length, it was found necessary to place a party of police in the farm yard, and to make it a station.

Mr Michael Dwyer, who was a prominent tithe agitator in his time, ejected and distrained some tenants at Lynone; he is now obliged, when he goes to that farm, to have a guard of police; his care-taker was attacked by an armed party, and obliged to give up his situation.

On the 4th of August 1834, at Clonkelly, a house was burned, belonging to Simon Ryan, from which the former tenant had been ejected.

On 25th August 1834, at Grange, the house of John Woods, who was placed as keeper over the other tenants, was attacked and fired into by night, and Woods was ordered to surrender his employment.

On the 5th July 1834, at Ballinree, the house of John Bushe was attacked by an armed party, who ordered him to give up his situation as keeper over the tenants.

On the 25th July 1834, at night, a number of men assembled and levelled a house at Clashavogue, the property of Patrick Quinn; on going away they desired Quinn to quit the place.

On the 20th June 1834, John Hickey, who had been placed as keeper on the lands of Sacken, was attacked by two men, who fractured his skull and broke his arm.

At Mullogh five armed men, with their faces blackened, went to shoot Thomas Morrissey, because he was obliged to dispossess some of his under-tenants; his life was saved by the party mistaking for him a neighbouring farmer, whom they met near Morrissey's house. A police party, and, subsequently, a party of military have been placed in his house for his protection.

In August 1832, a cow, the property of a man named Dwyer, at Ardmayle, was shot, because Dwyer had taken some land, of which the previous tenant, named Burke, had been dispossessed. In the same month Dwyer's care-taker, a man named Shea, *was shot dead* in the noonday in a public house at Ardmayle, by young Burke and his brother-in-law, Breen, who were hanged for the murder: since that time several other serious outrages have been perpetrated against Dwyer.

On the 24th June 1834, the houses of William Hayes and William Cross, of Ballykelly, were attacked by an armed party, who fired into them, and left orders not to take a farm lately held by one Mahony.

On the 28th of June 1834, the house of John Carew, of Marlhill, was fired into by an armed party, and the door broken, because he had recently taken a farm from which the previous tenant had been ejected.

On the 30th June 1834, an armed party of fifteen men, with their faces blackened, entered and searched the house of Mr John Heney, of Ballynahinch, for the purpose of killing him, because he was about ejecting some tenants.

On the 28th of May 1834, Thomas and Edmund Quinn, aided and assisted by others, forcibly re-entered and took possession of the lands Garry-Andrew, of which they had been dispossessed by the sheriff under a *habere*.

On the first day of spring assizes 1835, a party of twelve or fourteen armed men, with their faces blackened, waylaid, attacked, and desperately wounded Dr Charles Fitzpatrick, at Coolmore, while on his way to the assize town, to prosecute an appeal against some tenants, against whom he had obtained ejectment decrees; this party robbed him of the papers which he had to produce in support of his case.

In the summer of 1834 an armed party by night visited Lord Ormond's tenants, near Golden, and swore them not to pay more than half rent for that year.



At Clonhaleigh, James Horan was shot dead, in the noonday, in his own garden, by two brothers, named Regan, whose father had been ejected from the farm which Horan had taken. The murderers were hanged.

The above are selected out of a number of similar cases.

The following instances are mentioned as a proof that ejectments not immediately connected with land do not produce disturbances :—

A schoolhouse was built many years ago in the parish of Ballychean on ground rented on certain terms ; the rent was not paid, and this year a process of ejectment has been brought *against the schoolmaster and the parish priest as joint defendants ; and it has not produced any outrage or popular disturbances in the parish*, though the action is brought against the two persons, who may naturally be supposed capable of exciting the feelings of their neighbours.

Crimes connected with land-hiring are rarely committed by the persons most immediately interested.—(Messrs *Long, Fitzgerald, Clarke, Pennefather.*)

—To illustrate this, the following instances were given :—

Mr Chadwick, agent to Mr Sadleir, who had been dispossessing some tenants on the lands of Rathconan, was superintending the building of a police barracks, and while speaking to a man on the road, at two o'clock in the afternoon, two men jumped over the hedge and shot him dead ; the murderers (one of whom was afterwards executed), were quite unconnected with the ground which had been undertenanted.

On the 1st of November last Captain Maguire was killed in his own shrubbery, near his own door, by two persons (strangers) brought there for the purpose by some tenants who were under ejectment.

To the question whether the people are ever instigated to assassination, Whiteboyism, &c., by people much superior to themselves in condition, Dr *Fitzgerald* gives the following answer, referring to two murders which have been already mentioned : “ In June 1834, a young man, named John Bibby, was murdered within half a mile of Cashel, about four o'clock in the afternoon. On the same night, about half past ten, his father was murdered about 12 miles from Cashel ; and both these murders were procured by a person whom I will not name publicly, belonging to the better order of farmers, in consequence of being turned out of land which it was *conjectured* the agent was going to let to the Bibbies. This case is for trial at the ensuing assizes.”

The other witnesses present concur in the statements that such instigations do take place. They likewise agree in stating that rents have been affected by intimidation ; that the committal of outrages of this nature is sanctioned directly or indirectly by the mass of the agricultural working people as necessary to protect their general interest ; and that lawless habits and a recklessness of life may be traced to this practice of making their own regulations and joining in the infliction of punishments for private wrongs.

The following instance of outrage was mentioned :—

Baron Pennefather, considered truly to be one of the best landlords in the country, purchased some years ago an estate at Knockgraffon, at that time overrun with population. He *purchased out* the redundant population, divided the estate into larger farms, gave leases to the tenants on moderate terms, and built slated houses for them—in one word, made them as comfortable as their class requires : in the present year not one of them would pay a farthing's rent (they had paid in all former years), and he was obliged to direct his agent to distrain on 99 of them, who all held land in quantities varying from 5 to 60 acres. They had received notice that they would be distrained on, if they did not pay by a certain day ; not having done so 12 were distrained on in one day, and whilst the drivers were taking the cattle to the

pound, they were attacked at noon-day by eight armed men, with blackened faces, who rescued the cattle and spared two of the drivers, who were tenants on the property, but beat, until they left him for dead, a man named Quinlan, who had been brought out from Cashel to assist them.

*Limerick, Barony Conello.* F. 65.—Latterly there have been very few disturbances in this barony. A few acts of violence, however, can be traced to causes connected with the taking of land.

Colonel *Dickson* says, "A man was hanged at the last assizes for murdering a man because he was the last life in the lease, and they conceived if the lease was out they would get a renewal."

Mr *Browne* says, "In 1834, a farm belonging to Mr *Dickson*, at Shanagolden, was let to a new tenant, and soon after the house was set on fire, and all his goods and cattle were burned."

There was another case, this spring, in Shanid, of a similar sort; the out-houses were set on fire at night, and the new tenant could barely save his cows. Colonel *Dickson* says, "I let a farm to a poor widow whose house was attacked and the out-houses burned very soon after she entered on the farm." Burnings and other crimes are generally attributed to the destitution to which tenants and their families are reduced by losing their farms."—(Colonel *Dickson*, Mr *Royal*.)—"Even if not reduced to perfect destitution, I think an expelled tenant, from the advice of those around him, would commit violence. It is considered so great a hardship to be turned out that he would be recommended and assisted to revenge himself."—(Mr *Brown*.)—Crimes connected with land-hiring are often committed by those who are not themselves sufferers from the acts of the person whom they injure. It is said there is a private feeling amongst the peasantry that the ejected tenant should not commit the crime himself, as it is supposed he would be suspected. Several instances of hiring others to commit outrages have occurred in Limerick. It was proved that the murderer of Mr *Millar* received 2s. 6d.; another man, who was hung for shooting a post-boy, confessed he received 10s. for doing it.

"Before the year 1822 it was generally believed that the smaller landholders were incited to the commission of outrages by persons of superior rank to themselves; but this could never be legally proved against them. Since 1822 this part of the country has been quiet. We cannot say what motive may have induced people secretly to incite others to disturbances."—(Mr *Brown*, &c.)—It is not thought that rents have been affected by intimidation. "The mass of the agricultural working people are at least easily got to assist in the commission of outrages, though perhaps not often the originators of them."—(Mr *Brown*, Colonel *Dickson*.)

*Waterford Barony, Decies without Drunny.* F. 70.—A large proportion of the crimes committed here are connected with the taking of land.—(Mr *B. Boate*.)—"We think that the system of intimidation does not exist to any extent in this county. We cannot mention any cases of outrage that have taken place connected with taking land."—(Messrs *Hudson*, *O'Brien*, *Qualey*, and *Welsh*.)—Such crimes, when they take place, are committed by strangers employed by the sufferers, as being the least likely to be suspected.—(Mr *Boate*, &c.)—Persons above the rank of the small landholders have instigated the people to Whiteboyism, &c. Farmers' sons of the more comfortable class have been engaged in it.—(Mr *Boate*.)—There has been no instance of rents having been affected by intimidation on the part of the peasantry.—(Messrs *Boate* and *Healy*.)—In some instances, but generally, the committal of outrages is sanctioned by the mass of the agricultural working people.—(Mr *Boate* and Mr *Healy*.)

*Barony Middlethird.* F. 71.—It is stated that this county is comparatively

a quiet one, but any disturbances that have taken place here are supposed to have arisen from causes connected with the taking of land—*consolidation* of farms and eviction of tenants. Tithes are not demanded now, but were formerly a source of disturbance.—(Mr *Christmas* and Mr *Ronayne*.)—Landholders are supposed to have been led to commit crime by their wives and children having been left destitute. Crimes connected with the taking of, or ejection from, land, are generally committed by persons not themselves interested, but procured by the sufferer.—(Mr *Christmas* and Mr *Murwell*.)—There has been no instance in this barony of people being instigated to Whiteboyism by persons of a superior rank to themselves —(Mr *Duckett* and Mr *Sherlock*.)

*Fermanagh*. F. 76.—There have been no combinations or crimes connected with the taking of land, nor have rents been affected by combinations on the part of the peasantry of this barony; but in other parts of the county of Fermanagh crimes arising out of that cause have been committed.

*Monaghan*. F. 77.—Mr *Hamilton* is of opinion that a great many outrages, and of the worst description, arise from the taking of land. On the point whether it was the destitution of the labourer, or the fear of it, that led him to crime, the Rev. Mr *M'Mahon*, P. P., said—"That is no doubt the cause." Upon examination into the cases mentioned by persons present of outrages committed, it was found that it was by the friends of those ejected that the outrages were committed on those who took the land. Several persons were found guilty and sentenced to transportation for life at the last assizes of Monaghan, for beating a man to death who took land from which another had been ejected. Many instances were also mentioned of burnings that had taken place, and of notices served on persons, warning them not to take land from which some others had been ejected; but the gentlemen present said the system was not very prevalent throughout the barony, but was confined chiefly to the parish of Tydavnet.

*Tyrone*. F. 78.—In conversation with the farmers in different parts of the district as to whether outrages were sanctioned by the mass of the agricultural working people, as necessary to protect their general interest, they said that if a man took land over their heads they would be revenged; the expression of one farmer on this occasion was, "that he would stand over the man who took his land and see him burning in flames."

A remarkable instance in proof of the extreme fertility of land-letting in the production of crime appears in the preceding evidence taken in the barony of Middlethird, county Tipperary. After the recital of a long list of crimes, immediately connected with land taking, an instance is given of the priest and schoolmaster of the parish, having been ejected from a piece of land upon which they had built a schoolroom. And no violence was committed upon the parties connected with the ejection. That community of which so much lawlessness had been narrated were not excited to crime, although the persons they hold the most sacred were immediately concerned. It would be impossible to produce stronger proof that wild and ungovernable passions are not the instigators to the majority of the great crimes of Ireland, for a distinction could not possibly be drawn more nicely than between the land which gives food, and the land which does not; especially considering that the latter was



held by persons towards whom the attachment of the peasantry is proverbially great. Another proof that they are not instigated to crime by general habits of lawlessness is, that they rarely illtreat strangers who go about seeking work, or those who underbid them when working for money wages, which they obtain only when engaged in occasional employment. They do not depend upon wages for food, but for the means of paying the rent of the land which gives the food. Wages are not, therefore, deemed of the same importance as land, which is their first thought, and to which all other things are secondary. This, though a nice distinction, is a difference. In towns, however, wages are all important: combinations similar to those in the rural districts exist for the protection of the working men, and punishments are awarded equally frightful with those practised by the peasantry. Trades Unions in towns are analagous to Riband Societies in the rural districts, and both were instituted with the same view—protection of the labouring classes from destitution.

The same motives which lead to the commission of crime as a punishment for land-taking, also induce the peasantry to screen those who execute their decrees, and to endeavour to impede and to punish those who attempt to bring the criminal before the tribunals of the country.

The witnesses against the murderer of one who has taken “land over the head,” are frequently murdered either before trial to prevent conviction, or after trial as a warning to others. Even the magistrate who has been about to receive evidence against a murderer has been shot at, and every attempt at intimidation practised upon him.

*Tipperary, Middlethirld.*—The same Gony agreed to shoot one Edmund Russell, because he was a crown witness against a man named Breen, charged with the murder of John Bibby. The murder arose out of ejectment from land.

A conspiracy was formed by six men to shoot Mr Fitzgerald, the magistrate, when going to the assize town; because he was to superintend a prosecution against a man named Burke, charged with murder, arising from the dispossessing some tenants of land.

It is a proof of the sanction of the peasantry that the man who has committed a murder does not conceal the fact, but boasts of it. He is one who is believed to have done an essential good to society, and knows that by the people he is deemed entitled to shelter, to work, to food; and to every indulgence, and every mark of favour which they can bestow.

In further proof of the feeling prevalent amongst the pasantry on this subject, I may cite the extraordinary case of a man who came into a neighbourhood in which he was unknown and



accused himself of murder. On being arrested and questioned by the magistrates, it turned out, that he had falsely accused himself, well knowing that the accusation would procure him food and shelter. It is notorious that the farmers feel bound to find work for persons who may be guilty of such offences, and that the peasantry look upon those who are hanged or transported for such offences as martyrs for the general good, and that they protect and cherish their widows and orphans.

*Tipperary, Middlethird.*—Mr *Fitzgerald* says, “I know an instance of a man, who went to a district some miles from this, and stated that he had committed murder, and had been obliged to quit his own place, being on the “run;” this having transpired, in sometime after he was brought before me, and it was satisfactorily proved that he was not guilty of the offence he charged himself with; when questioned as to his charging himself with so ruinous an offence, he replied it was his anxiety to obtain work. The Rev. Mr *Saffon* having had the foregoing evidence read to him said, I know that a feeling would exist, and a very strong one in favour of giving work to a man under such circumstances, because he was in a forlorn condition, having risked his life in the popular cause, having put an end to an oppressive landlord and the collector, &c.

*Tipperary.* F. 119.—The Assistant Commissioners were accosted one day by a man, who stated that he was glad he met them, as he was anxious to ask how he should act under the following circumstances:—

“I held that farm (pointing to some ground near the road side) at a deal higher rent than the land could make; and of course I got into arrear. I was immediately turned out by the landlord, and my wife and children are now beholden to the neighbours. Of course no one *dare* take it until they got my *good-will* of it, and I’m waiting until Government passes the Corporation Bill, to see if I would get it back then, as it is what is called *corporation land*; and I believe the landlord turned me out unjustly, as he himself has no real title in it, only he is *rich* and I am *poor*.”

The Assistant Commissioners then asked him what feeling he would entertain against any man who might chance to take it. He replied, “To be sure I would have a bad feeling to him, and why should not I? The devil a much of the world’s bread he would eat after it any way, as I would die to have his life, or any one like him, that would step in to *take the bread out of my wife’s and children’s mouths*.”

The Assistant Commissioners then asked him with what feelings would the peasantry look on the family of a man who was hanged for “*beating a man to death*” \* under such circumstances? He replied, “His wife and family would be *regarded*, and why not? I would take the bit out of my wife’s or children’s mouth before I would see his, the *poor* things! want it; because didn’t he lose his life for the good of the people, and die in the ‘*cause*?’ And I’ll tell you what is more, gentlemen, that although the people may ‘*fault*’ and abuse the ‘*Whifefeet*,’ and boys that go round at night with the ‘*black faces*,’ that only for them the whole country would be in a *rising*; the poor would have no protection at all, the landlords would hunt them out, like rats out of a corn-stack, without any sort of compunction, only they know the ground would be left on their hands, as any man that would take it ‘*knows his fate*;’ and sure, if in doing that any boy should *suffer* (i. e., be hanged), why should we not succour the poor things left behind them? Sure

\* The man appeared to dislike calling it murder, and those are the words he used.

was not it to prevent us, and the likes of us, being turned adrift on the wide world that they *came to that pass?* ”

In asking what would be the feeling towards an “informer,” he replied, “Faith, he should quit that moment, or ‘*God help him* ;’ and, more than that, the people would ‘*disgust*’ even his family and every one belonging to him, because he would be nothing better than a ‘*blood seller*.’ ”

A person at Cashel, who had been ejected from a small farm, which another man wished to take, but did not dare, applied to the Assistant Commissioners for their advice as to whether he should accept a sum of money which that person offered him,\* to do him *no mischief* if he entered on his old farm, or whether he should decline to receive it, and wait for the chance of his land being again got for him by something connected with Poor-laws. He stated that the man who offered him the money dare not take the land, for fear that he (the old tenant) should murder him.

It is frequently supposed that the peasantry in all cases resist the law. This is not true. There are crimes which they, as well as the law, condemn, and when their own interests and the law coincide, so far from impeding they assist those who are charged with its execution. A man who had evidently committed one of those murders which receive the sanction of the peasantry, having successfully eluded the pursuit of the police, the constable at length bethought himself of assuring the people that the man had been guilty of a rape, when they instantly surrendered him.

*Tipperary, Middlethird.*—The Rev. Mr *Malony* states—I was informed by a chief Constable of Police that he was in pursuit of a man charged with murder, and that he was frustrated in his attempts to arrest him by the people screening him; but he at last thought of a plan by which he might succeed, which was merely informing them that the man had committed a rape, when the people immediately assisted him in arresting him.

The outrages committed are apparently most disproportionate to the injury which they are intended to punish. But when it is considered that loss of land in Ireland means, in most cases, a life of mendicancy, in many cases starvation, and in all a state of misery, more to be dreaded than death, the disproportion of the punishment to the offence will not appear so great. Again, it is necessary to consider that more lenient punishments are impossible, where secrecy and expedition are imperative conditions.

It is worthy of the most serious consideration that the same peasantry who sanction the greatest atrocities, both against person and property, give daily proof of possessing in the highest perfection the finest sympathies which adorn human nature. No points connected with the Irish peasantry are better established by the evidence, than their universal affection towards their relatives and friends, and their humanity to the wandering stranger. In the various relations of child, of parent, and of

\* *i. e.* For his good-will.

friend, they appear to be unrivalled. Frequently the man, who at night deprived his fellow creature of life, had a few hours previously divided his last potatoe with the widow and the orphan; and those who witness and sanction his crime return to shelter and to comfort the houseless and hungry.

All ranks concur in stating, that however destitute may be the condition of the peasantry, outrage on the person for the purpose of robbery, breaking into dwelling-houses, horse, cattle, and sheep-stealing, are almost unknown.

Political outrages are nearly as rare, and do not bear the proportion of 1 per cent. upon crimes connected with landholding. In those counties which have been proclaimed, and in which it has been found necessary to enforce "Coercion" and "Peace Preservation Acts," and to increase the police, it will generally be found, that an extensive ejection of the wretched tenantry had preceded the disturbances, and that the atrocities committed were in revenge upon those who have taken possession. As to forms of government, the peasantry neither understand nor care about them. They believe certain individuals to be their friends, and to be anxious to gain food and justice for them, and therefore they are in favour of certain individuals. If they obtained food and justice their political wants would be satisfied.

*Mayo*, 381.—Rev. Mr *Gibbons*, though not present at this day's examination, told us yesterday in connexion with this subject, that the greatest anxiety prevails among his people to learn whether any changes are in progress that are likely to better their condition; in the words of one of themselves, "Is the Government doing anything for us, or will we be better off next year than we are this?" They always apply to him, as he gets the only newspaper that comes into the parish. "When I can tell them the Government is thinking of them," he says, "I send them away happy and contented: this inquiry has given them great hopes. God grant that they may be not disappointed?"

Religio-political outrages are nearly confined to the north, where the population is mixed. In the provinces of Connaught, Leinster, and Munster, the number of Protestants in a parish is so few, as to render feuds between them and the Catholics impossible. These statements will appear incredible to those who have been in the habit of concluding that all disturbances and outrages in Ireland are political, instead of being in almost every case connected with food.

It is a very common error in England to suppose that outrages in Ireland are by Catholics on Protestants, whilst nine-tenths of them are committed by Catholics on Catholics, and have not the slightest connexion with religious feeling. Protestants are rarely concerned in Agrarian disturbances, their condition being generally more comfortable than that of the



Catholics. Being of the same persuasion as the majority of the landlords, they are greatly favoured.

*Down, Bar. Iveagh.* F. 140.—Upon the question, “Whether many would now emigrate, if a free passage to America were given them, who have hitherto forborne to do so?” *William Rowan* answered, “Several would, *because their privileges are infringed upon as Protestants*”—“*I would, for one.*” (*Thomas Rowan.*)—*Hogan* explained the circumstance in this way; “that until lately the Roman Catholics got no leases of land, but the Protestants had good ones; and when their leases were falling in now the landlords were raising the rent on them as well as on the Roman Catholic, so that now they were not better off than the Roman Catholics, and may be some of them did not like that, and went away.”

In like manner, it is commonly believed that the opposition to tithes by the peasantry is wholly connected with religious feeling. This is not the truth. The contention is purely domestic. A starving peasantry refuse to share their scanty meal with the minister of a different religion, from whom they do not feel that they derive any advantage. Were they not distressed they would no more have opposed tithes and church rates, or cess, than did the Dissenters of England, by whom, from their comfortable condition, those imposts were not till lately deemed worthy of personal strife. The peasantry of Ireland cannot be expected to perceive, that if the amount which is now paid for tithe did not go to the clergy, it would be taken for rent; many, however, are now becoming sensible of the fact.

Besides the more serious crimes against person and against property which are resorted to under a general league of the peasantry, in order to give them greater security in their holdings, and which are the direct effects of the anxiety for land, there are others of a milder nature which indirectly proceed from the same source, and form part of the series of evils which I am about to point out, as being produced through the medium of *nominal rents*—which system originates in the anxiety for land.

As, by violence, the peasantry seek to terrify, and thus to keep off succeeding tenants, so by paying all that their means permit they seek to conciliate, and thus to render their landlords unwilling to eject them. This compels the peasantry to be content with a quantity just sufficient to sustain existence of the poorest food, viz. the potatoe, and to cultivate the least nutritious, and what is even worse, the most perishable species of that vegetable—the lumpers. The use of the apple or of the cup potatoe is more expensive, and, consequently, is discouraged by those under whom the peasantry hold their lands.

*Dublin.* F. 227.—Though most of the small occupiers and labourers grow apples and cups, they do not use them themselves, with the few exceptions

mentioned, except as holiday fare, and as a little indulgence on particular occasions. They can only afford to consume the lumpers or coarsest quality themselves, on account of the much larger produce, and consequent cheapness, of that sort. The apples yield 10 to 15 per cent. less than the cups, and the cups 10 to 15 per cent. less than the lumpers, making a difference of 20 to 30 per cent. between the produce of the best and the worst qualities. To illustrate the practice and the feeling of the country in this respect, the following occurrence was related by one of the witnesses:—A landlord, in passing the door of one of his tenants, a small occupier, who was in arrears with his rent, saw one of his daughters washing potatoes at the door, and, perceiving that they were of the apple kind, asked her if they were intended for her dinner. Upon being answered that they were, he entered the house, and asked the tenant what he meant by eating apple potatoes when they were fetching so good a price in Dublin, and while he did not pay him (the landlord) his rent?

An annual famine in Ireland is the immediate consequence of the use of the potatoe for the subsistence of the people.

There are two circumstances connected with the potatoe which make it wholly unfit for the principal food of a nation.

First, Even the best quality becomes unfit for human food in less than a twelvemonth, and, consequently, a period precedes each crop, during which the population are compelled to be content with food unwholesome in quality, as well as insufficient in quantity. The old potatoe begins to decay generally about the end of June, whilst the new crop does not come to maturity till the beginning of September; the length of the time of scarcity, depends both on the time that the old crop will keep, and the season at which the new crop comes in.

The second objection to the potatoe as the principal food for a people, is its bulkiness, and consequent difficulty and expense of conveyance. In Ireland potatoes are often comparatively cheap twenty miles only from a place at which a famine exists. To carry potatoes that distance, even on a good road, enhances their price 50 per cent.

During the months of June, July, August, and September, the whole of the labouring population suffer the severest privation, few of them having a sufficient quantity even of a food which has begun to decay, and many being obliged to stay the cravings of hunger by resorting to the use of weeds in mixture with the half putrid potatoe. At this season *starvation* sometimes occurs in those parts of Ireland in which all are equally necessitous, as in the Connemara district of Galway, in the district of Erris in Mayo, and in parts of Kerry.

Death from inanition, however, is almost as little known in Ireland as in Great Britain, and can only occur during this season, as at other times no person would be refused a meal, so charitable are the peasantry. But though death from inanition is so rare as to be almost unknown the

cases of premature old age, arising from scanty and bad food, are frightfully abundant. Fatal fevers from the same cause are annually numerous, and dropsy is commonly generated thereby, even in very young children, a disease which rarely occurs in England to persons under 40 or 50 years of age.

So severe are the sufferings of the peasantry during the months of June, July, August, and September, that even the most quiet and best disposed, yield to the cravings of nature; and remarkable as the Irish peasantry are for patient endurance of misery, they are then continually driven to commit depredations. Provisions of every description are stolen by them; and pits and outhouses containing potatoes are frequently broken open. Potatoes, cabbages, and turnips, are rooted up whilst growing. Provision boats on the canals, and provision carts on the roads are either robbed, or the sale of their contents enforced to prevent them from leaving the district. Sacks are cut whilst standing in the markets, or in carts on the roads, and the provisions thus strewn on the ground. Corn stores and bakers' shops are broken into, and cows are milked during the night.

Robberies which are punishable with imprisonment and even with transportation are numerous during these months, and sufficient in number to crowd the prisons. But no one will in such cases prosecute. All seem to recognise the severity of the distress which can instigate the peasantry to such acts, and consequently anger gives place to pity.

The labourer, if prosecuted, must associate with felons, because he will not starve, and society must run the risk of those evils which may be expected to follow from the demoralization of himself and his children.

*Galway, Parish Tuam.* A. 364.—Numbers would rather starve than expose themselves to the shame of a prison, a feeling, however, which increasing distress is wearing away. Some few instances are known of persons having been guilty of robberies with a view to relieving themselves from want.—Dr John Hale.

*Parish Killimore.* A. 360 —They often steal turf, potatoes, and cabbage, when in great want; I have caught persons stealing my own. I did not prosecute them; common humanity prevented me, for I knew that it was want caused them to do it.—(*Egan.*)

*Mayo, Barony Tyrawley.* A. 366.—“Plunder,” says *Duffy*, “and such business has often brought an honest man to transportation. Many a mischief is done in poverty and distress that would not be done but for them. When I am hungry and want a meal, I will go out at night, and do what I would never do if hunger did not drive me. When a man is hungry, the shame goes off him; many a mischief is done to gentlemen of the country that they must overlook, when they know the poverty of the people; and the poor man's potatoes and cabbage suffer, too; and if I saw my own suffering, I would take my eyes off the man when I knew his distress.”—*Cooper* says,



“When a man has nothing to eat, and nothing to do but to sit by the fire (if he has one) and think of his misery, many strange thoughts will be running through his head, and it is hard for him to keep them out.”—Mr *Costello*, Mr *Verschoyle*, Mr *Caldwell*, &c. say, “It is a common practice here to root potatoes from the ridge; or the pit and out-offices, where potatoes were stored, have frequently been broken open by night and plundered.”

*Roscommon, Parish Boyle.* A. 388.—Mr *Lloyd* stated that he once saw a man cutting a large hole in the side of the road, which he said he was doing to obtain manure. “If you persist, I shall be compelled to send you to gaol.”—“Indeed, then, your honour, I should be extremely obliged to you if you would.”—“It is not uncommon,” said Mr *Crofton*, “to hear the poor jesting upon their having such a last resort, but the instances where it is put into practice are exceedingly rare. Potatoe pits, in scarce seasons, have been known to be broken open, but dishonesty is not fairly chargeable upon any class of the poor, except the hardened beggars; starvation is, generally speaking, not heard of.”

*Sligo, Parish Kilmacshalgan.* H. 392.—There are not many instances of persons being driven to commit robberies to relieve themselves from destitution. Some years ago, at a time of great distress, there were robberies of provisions, and certainly from hunger solely.

*Parish Aghade.* A. 394.—The petty robberies of potatoes which frequently are committed arise altogether from destitution and want, not from immoral feelings, and never to procure their being sent to prison for food.

*Co. Cork, Par. St Mary's, Shandon.* A. 443.—Sometimes you see the children of the poor stealing hay and straw from the carts on the quay, and thus grow up to be thieves and pickpockets.

*Parish Killeagh.* H. 435.—Potatoes, notwithstanding the expense of carriage, would be often brought from where they are abundant and cheap, to parishes where they are very dear, but for a dread that they would be stopped in some intermediate parish, and forcibly compelled to be sold.

*Carlow—Carlow.* A. 394.—They do not commit offences for the purpose of being sent to gaol where they would get food, they prefer begging. But Mr *Butler* states he has heard a woman exclaim from the dock when acquitted she would rather go back to prison, as she had no means of support.

The poor have been known to attack bakers' shops and boats with provisions, in times of great scarcity and distress.

Half the petty thefts are from distress. “Many,” says Mr *Butler*, “have been brought before me as a magistrate, under such circumstances. It is to us all a matter of wonder how they bear their situation with half the patience they do.” *Kenna* says, “There were five stone of potatoes stolen from him to day, five barrels of potatoes have been taken from the same cause in one night: *Kenna* observes, my cow has been often milked in the night to serve the children.

*Byrne* and *Kennie* say, If under such circumstances they took half what we possess in the world, we would not prosecute. They have not committed outrages, though left most destitute. All the witnesses agreed that without doubt the amount of evil thus created and propagated was greater than any that would arise from giving them direct support.

*Par. Ludlow.* A. 599.—None have committed offences for the sake of being supported in gaol; but many declare their disposition to do so to obtain food, which they would rather do than starve. Many are guilty of small thefts, chiefly of taking potatoes by night out of the pits. Mr *J. Murphy* has had his cows milked three or four times this summer, as he believes, from mere distress; and he also lost in one night two barrels of potatoes. The destitute have not been guilty of outrages upon persons for the purpose of preventing

starvation. Unquestionably society suffers more by demoralization thus created than it would by directly supporting them.

*Par. St Mullins.* A. 596.—Instances are not wanting where great distress has driven poor people to steal potatoes and other provisions. Dr *Wilcocks* is induced from what he has heard, to think the practice very frequent; and the Rev. Mr *Saunders* stated,—“I have at the present moment a man in my employment who robbed me of potatoes four or five years ago, when labouring under sheer privation, for which reason I did not prosecute him.”

A. 395.—Messrs *O'Neill, Dowling, &c.* say, “they know many instances of labourers out of employment threatening to commit offences, that they may be sent to gaol, if they could not procure some food for their wives and families.”

*Kildare, Par. Kilcock.* A. 399.—Mr *Hughes* states—“If they were to break all the windows in Kilcock, not a soul would send them to gaol, well knowing their real wants and distress.” And he farther adds, “there is no act to which a destitute starving people may not be driven, naturally thinking that any change must be for the better. The poor here do not steal anything.” Mr *Hughes* says, “they would rather go beg it from the farmers than steal. Though they are not guilty of any outrages on person, but for the most part depend upon the neighbours, yet during the month of July 1830, a time of great distress, the canal boats were stopped and robbed of provisions.”

*Carberry.* A. 397.—They steal potatoes when in great distress; and in the neighbouring parishes outrages have been committed by plundering boats and provision carts. Society suffers much more from such outrages and constant pilfering than it would by a tax.

*Par. Nuas.* A. 400.—It is a matter of frequent occurrence to find able-bodied persons committing trifling offences for the purpose of being sent to gaol, and getting food and shelter there, and, of course, must mix with the worst characters, and suffer by contamination with their vices.

Captain *Connor* states, during seasons of great want, when any provisions are stolen, the magistrates direct the police to go to the houses of those labourers whose destitution is well known; and the provisions, if not discovered within the house, are always secreted near it.

*Pat Byrne*, now a labourer, formerly a farmer of 60 acres, says, I have often stolen potatoes from my mother in order to give them to men whose families I knew to be starving.

*Meath, Par. Clonard.* A. 406.—There are many instances of stealing from destitution. Mr *Flood* says, I perfectly recollect three or four instances.

*Dublin, Balrothery.*—Potatoe fields indeed have been pilfered, sacks cut in the markets and on carts, and other petty robberies committed, but all of potatoes and other articles of food.

*Meath, Kells.*—When scarcity existed, the people stopped carts and cut the sacks containing potatoes, which they strewed on the road, not with the object of plundering, but to prevent strangers from coming to purchase, and take them out of the country.

*Meath, Mayfeuragh.*—Disturbances have become more frequent in years of scarcity only as far as these disturbances related to provisions; in such seasons, the labourers stole bread, and broke open potatoe stores, and stopped corn and potatoe carts in the mid-day and on the high road. *Gilshimmon* recollected that in the last year of the scarcity of potatoes, the working classes broke open his potatoe house, and some of his neighbours' barns; and that some sent their corn into the town stores for safety.

*Louth, Dundalk.*—Disturbances have arisen from the scarcity of potatoes, only as far as related to food. This was the case in the year 1826 and 1830 and other years of general scarcity, during which, the labouring classes were

obliged to beg for potatoes or meat, and in some cases where they were refused they took them forcibly.

*Kerry, Truch.* 7.—In 1822 and 1823 the country was disturbed, and potatoes were very dear. In 1816 the country was tranquil and potatoes were dear. In 1825 also they were dear, and the country was quite tranquil. We do not expect disturbances because we foresee a scarcity of food.—(*O'Keeffe.*)

*Limerick, Connallue.*—Mr *Boyse* says, I know several instances where disturbances that became very important originated in this way. For instance, during years of scarcity, labourers have collected and gone round the district administering oaths to provision merchants and farmers, which afterwards ended in very general disturbances. Mr *Blennerhasset* says, in 1821 the first acts of violence were entering into houses and insisting on the price of milk; afterwards these disturbances spread to other objects. Captain *Dickinson* says, I consider that men who are badly clad and whose houses are badly roofed and careless, whether they are out patrolling at night or not. Mr *Boyse* says, I know men who have committed petty thefts for the purpose of being transported.

*Londonderry, Par. Drumachose.* A. 469.—Henry *Greir* knew one man who was driven through destitution to steal some potatoes for his wife and family; he was sent to gaol, but is now an industrious man, caretaker to a gentleman near this, and his wife and children bear an excellent character. No misery, in 99 cases out of 100, leads them to commit offences. They scarcely if ever steal, and then only sufficient of potatoes to prevent starvation.

*Bar: Loughinsholin.* A. 471.—Bradley says, the poor would all but starve; they would live on half a meal a day before they beg, much less before they would steal. Potatoe pits have been occasionally in scarce times opened by destitute persons, but not since Mr Holmes came; he had found frequently his potatoe pits broken open, but generally traced it to thieving rather than to want.

*Londonderry, Par. Upper Cunher.* A. 468.—Potatoes have sometimes been stolen in hard times, to relieve immediate destitution, but very few offences of this nature have been committed. *Millar*, however, said, I have heard a man declare when he was in great distress, that he wished he was in gaol, for there he would be fed, at least. But no instance was known where persons had endeavoured for this reason to be sent to gaol. Very few thefts, and no outrages, have been committed owing to destitution.

*City of Londonderry.* A. 473.—Paupers do not steal, but householders, through fear of starvation, have been known to open potatoe pits; this is very rare, and only occurs in hard seasons. No outrages have occurred from want here.

*Par. Dungiven.* A. 470.—Of the few who have been sent to gaol for trifling offences caused by destitution, almost all become again industrious. They will do all but starve, and that is as much as any man can require. (*Irwon.*)

The unwillingness to prosecute sufficiently explains one of the most striking circumstances, established by the almost invariable assurance of the wealthier classes, that the poor, even whilst suffering under the severest want, do not seek the food and shelter of a prison: they are permitted to take those things for which alone they could desire such a refuge. So strong are those assurances as at first to create astonishment at the extremely high morality of the people; a morality which in England is not even enforced, as the proof of a theft being urged by immediate starvation usually screens the culprit.



To offend against the laws, or to lie down and perish, is the bitter choice open to the Irish peasantry. Those crimes which in England and in many countries are dictated by the immoral desire to live a life of luxury and dissipation without undergoing the toil of industry, are almost unknown in Ireland, as burglary, highway robbery, sheep, horse, and cattle stealing. The highest credit is undoubtedly due to the peasantry of Ireland for their honesty. Wretched as their condition is at all times, it is almost incredible, that they are seldom guilty of robbery, but to appease the cravings of the moment. Since, however, famine is of annual recurrence, since there are at all times and in all districts persons unable to procure food, in no country can property of that description be less secure. Distress is no doubt frequently aggravated by the insecurity which thus exists in the transmission of food. Those who would find it to their interest to convey it to districts in which it is scarce, are constantly deterred by the risk of its being plundered by the starving population amongst whom it must pass.

Did corn form the principal food of Ireland, famine would be as little known as it is in Great Britain. Most descriptions of corn will remain sound during four or five years under proper treatment, and thus the surplus of a fine harvest becomes available in a year of scarcity. The facility, and consequently the cheapness with which corn can be conveyed, is another material quality in its favor, from which famine is almost impossible within a few miles of abundance. A hundred weight of potatoes will only maintain a man eight days, whilst one cwt. of meal will maintain him from 50 to 56 days. (See App. D. Irish Report.) As corn in bulk is more portable than meal, it can be transported more cheaply, and at one-seventh or one-eighth the expense of potatoes. There are but few parts of Ireland now in which the state of the roads would be an impediment to the transport of food, the roads being in most parts nearly as good as those of England.

It might perhaps be difficult to estimate with accuracy the comparative cost, on an average of years, of potatoes and corn, as a food. Against the potatoes must be placed, first, the cost of producing that portion of the crop which perishes before it can be consumed, which in some years must be important, because, the produce of successive years being very different, it is always necessary to plant as much ground as will, under fair circumstances, yield a sufficient quantity of food for the coming year. Should the season prove more than ordinarily favorable the surplus may amount to a fifth or a sixth of the whole crop. Secondly, a very large allowance is requisite to meet the destruction of the crops during growth. The peasantry being

constantly compelled, from the deterioration of their stock and their inability to purchase meal, to dig portions of the growing crop prematurely. Sometimes they dig it when the produce is not more than a fourth of what it would have been at full growth. Sometimes they raise the stalks, take the young potatoes off when about the size of a marble, and replace the stalks upon the chance of their producing a full crop.

*Galway.* E. 1.—The longer the time that intervenes between the failure of the old crop and the coming in of the new, the greater the distress of the peasantry. Some are obliged to take out the potatoes when not the size of a pigeon's egg; and many who have not the new potatoes to dig, are reduced to one meal of potatoes, and a meal of cabbage, in the day.

F 3.—It is not uncommon to see the poor anticipate their crops, and dig them not only before they have acquired their full growth, but whilst they are still absolutely as unwholesome as when too old.—(Rev. Mr *Hughes*, P. P.)

*Leitrim.* F. 4.—Those who can afford to have an opinion as to the quality of their potatoes, consider that they begin to deteriorate about the beginning of June, and that they have become positively unwholesome by the end of the month; however, the poor stick to them as long as they last, and that is in general until the middle of July.—(Rev. T. *Maguire*, P. P.)

The greater portion of the new crop is not fit for use until the 15th of August, but long before that time the labourers have begun to dig theirs, especially if they wish to avoid going on credit.

*Mayo.* E. 5.—After the beginning of August the old potatoes are not considered good. The Rev. Mr *Dwyer*, P. P., states that, "then the people believe they begin to be unwholesome, but they would be very glad to get them, nevertheless. The main crop of potatoes is not fit for digging or for storage till November, when the stalks begin to wither. However, the digging of potatoes for daily use commences after Garlick Sunday, but not to such an extent as to prevent a great rise in the price; and a considerable quantity of that crop is prematurely used, and much loss thereby incurred; but the people cannot wait when their last year's crop has been exhausted."—(Sir S. O'Malley, Bart.)

*Sligo.* F. 7.—The shortest period known to have intervened between the old crop becoming unfit, and the new crop becoming fit, for human food, is a fortnight, but with many it extends to two months; and in proportion to its length is the distress that prevails, and the debt incurred by the necessity of living on credit."—(Mr *Dodwell*.)—"I have known those who could not get credit to dig their new potatoes whilst the roots were not bigger than plums. I should say that the too early use of the new potatoe is worse than the too long use of the old. I am sure, that in the first month's digging of new potatoes there is as much destroyed, as, if allowed to arrive at full growth, would have sufficed for three months' consumption.—(Rev. Mr *Yates*.)—There are no means known of making the superabundant crop of potatoes of one year provide for the scarcity of the next.—(Mr *Lumey*.)

*Kings.* F. 13.—Mr *Odlum* states, that at the end of summer potatoes are generally consumed; and he further stated, "I have frequently known the poor man to suffer severely, being obliged to dig his potatoe ground, where he would have more than three times the produce in six weeks after; this is often a matter of great suffering." A month is sometimes known to intervene, after the old crop is consumed, before the new one is fit for use, during which period the distress is greatly aggravated, inasmuch as the defi-

ciency of one year's potato crop cannot be supplied by the surplus of the former; for potatoes cannot be kept over from year to year as corn can.

*Louth. F. 14.*—The distress of the peasantry is almost always very great at this season, from the united causes of the want of potatoes, and the absence of employment, the month of July and the first half of August being a time during which work is extremely scarce. In fact, it may be said to amount, for those who have large families and not regular work, to an annual return of temporary famine. Those persons are under the necessity of beginning to take up their new crop of potatoes long before they come to maturity, and as they are frequently at that time not larger than marbles or walnuts, the dread of encroaching on their next year's means of subsistence, induces them to put themselves upon the shortest possible allowance which will support nature.—(Mr *W. Hackett*, Mr *Trainer*.)

*Meath Kells. F. 16.*—The witnesses, and other persons of all classes, gave the Assistant Commissioners the most appalling accounts of the dreadful state to which the want of food, between the two crops of potatoes, had reduced the poor in many former years. Privation (the usual allowance of potatoes being curtailed by one-half or two-thirds) was the common lot of almost all labourers only occasionally employed, but numerous families were obliged to live on a few pennyworths of meal, weekly (which they begged, or borrowed, during that time), made up into a kind of soup, by boiling it with the weed commonly called *prassagh* in Ireland, and *charlock* (wild mustard) in England. This plant is decidedly unwholesome, and when eaten in the manner just described, is said to render the skin nearly as yellow as its own flower. To such an extent is this practice carried in seasons of scarcity, and such are its noxious effects on the health of the poor, that the clergy were obliged to forbid their eating this weed; and in some cases the priests and farmers set persons to prevent them from gathering it.

In a number of cases the Assistant Commissioners found families subsisting entirely on their new crop of potatoes. The average size of the potatoe did not, at the time, exceed the size of a walnut; and, as they were thus consuming their crop about ten times as fast as if it had maintained its full maturity, the effect of such a knowledge must have been (and, it is well known, always is) to enforce the smallest possible allowance on those of whom that crop was to form almost the sole means of subsistence for the ensuing year. Independently of the ocular proofs of this lamentable anticipation of the crop, which the Assistant Commissioners had, by seeing the new potatoes boiling, or being eaten in a number of the cabins which they visited, the existence of the practice was confirmed, in many other cases, by seeing women and boys in the act of digging them up, and by occasionally meeting with ridges already partly cleared of their produce.

*Tyrone. F. 37.*—In July the potatoe usually becomes unfit for food. Instances were mentioned of the cottiers being obliged to dig out potatoes in one month which would have been sufficient provision for three months, if the poor cottiers could afford time for the potatoes to ripen.

The opinion of all the farmers was, that an acre of potatoes contains three times the quantity of human food than an acre of corn contains.

By the premature digging of the crop, not only is great destruction and consequent expense caused, but the chance of famine during the following season greatly encreased.

Another item in the calculation is, that the low feeding to which the peasantry are reduced during this and other seasons



makes them weak, and thus their labour is rendered inefficient, and therefore dear. It appears that they are frequently too weak from bad or insufficient food to perform their work. More men therefore are usually assigned to a quantity of work than in England.

Mr *Condon* says, "A labourer of mine has a severe affection of the bowels annually at the season when he begins to eat young potatoes. He suffers so much that it considerably lessens his strength; indeed I am so well aware of it that I never give him such hard work to do then as at any other season of the year. None of my labourers are so strong when they first begin to eat young potatoes as at any other season, and it is commonly remarked among themselves. They also know that the white potatoe, commonly grown for its prolific and hardy qualities, is not such strong food, nor so supporting as 'cup' potatoes. This is shown by their different effects upon cattle; white potatoes will not make a bullock so fat as the 'cup' sort."

It is frequently asserted that choice rather than poverty induces the peasantry of Ireland to resort to the potatoe as their staple food. The use of meal and of flour being rare, they have not the utensils or skill with which to make them palatable, especially to make flour into bread. They make it into a badly baked dough, in which shape it is, of course, far less agreeable than the potatoe. In the towns in which there are bakers, they use bread on holidays, as a great treat; and those of the Irish who come to England or go to America feed upon bread as much as do the English or the Americans, though they might easily obtain a supply of potatoes.

*Galway, Kilconnell*.—When it was asked "Whether the peasantry preferred potatoes to meal or bread," John Ginessey and others exclaimed, "Arrah then, Sir, why should we prefer that, that we feed our pigs on to better food, don't you like it better yourself, and why shouldn't we? Never believe them that would want to make you think that we'd eat wet lumpers if we could get good bread." There is no reason to suppose that the peasantry in any degree prefer potatoes to bread; whenever they can afford it they substitute meal, but in general they only use wheaten bread on certain festivals and occasions of rejoicing, such as marriages, &c. (Rev. Mr *Hughes*.)

*Mayo, Murrish*.—The small occupiers present declare their dislike to an unmixed diet of potatoes. Some of them exclaimed, "Just try potatoes for six months and you'll never wish to eat another."

*Sligo, Carberry*.—The peasantry seem most in favour of a mixed diet consisting of both meal or bread and potatoes. We like potatoes very well, but we don't like never to get any thing else. If a labouring man had even apples instead of wet lumpers or 'cups,' he would not grumble much.—(*James Gorman*.)

*Meath, Moyfuragh*.—All the labourers both in court and elsewhere, said that they were tired of living on potatoes alone, and would much rather have meal and bread, but they would like to have some of each for a change. "Potatoes," they said, were not "staying enough" (nourishing) for a man to work hard upon.

*Truaghanacmy, Kerry*.—They would prefer bread for breakfast and potatoes for dinner. (*Murphy Connor*.)

The reasons which the peasantry assign, however, are

high rents and low wages. It may be inferred, that if the production was increased the peasantry would be enabled to use corn; but if the production were instantly increased four-fold, they would be as poor as they now are, and would give precisely the same reason why they use the potatoe as a staple food. The Irish peasant's contract is a bare subsistence of the cheapest food. His anxiety for land and for employment would be then what it is now, and competition would cause him to make the same contract. If this be not the case, why do not the peasantry on the rich lands feed on corn? Those lands yield twice and three times as much as the mountain and bog lands, on which others equally ill fed are located.

The next evil to society, which arises from the anxiety of the peasantry for land, acting through a system of nominal rents, is the production of a large class of mendicants, wandering about the country seeking food and shelter.

Under the most favourable circumstances in which health and vigour can place the peasantry of Ireland, they are barely able to retain even sufficient of the cheapest food; it is therefore impossible for them to provide against those contingencies to which as human beings they are subject—old age and prolonged sickness—and, in the event of their premature decease, against destitution in their widows and children. An extensive body, consisting of aged persons, orphan children, and women with young families, are, therefore, through destitution, compelled to wander about the country begging for food and shelter.

Of the vagrants, widows with young families and orphan children form an immense proportion: men past work and their wives form another portion; and the wives and children of the "casual labourers," who have been distinguished as the third class of peasantry, form the remainder. The wives and children of the "casual labourers" only beg during the summer months, when their con-acre potatoes are exhausted, and when their husbands go to England or wander about Ireland in search of employment. Able-bodied men rarely beg;—first, because they are either at work or seeking work; and, secondly, because their appearance would be prejudicial to the success of their families, who generally represent themselves as widows and orphans. When they accompany their wives, they generally stay out of sight and carry the bag. Under the head of widows, those women who have young families and have been deserted by their husbands are included.

Instances frequently occur of men deserting their wives and families, because their feelings will not permit them to witness in those whom they love sufferings which they cannot avert or

alleviate. Society forbids a man to leave his wife and his children, principally because they should look to him for support. But when he is unable to afford them any assistance this object cannot be frustrated by his absence. In the peculiar circumstances of the Irish peasantry, it is difficult to determine whether the act of the man leaving his family is most to be condemned, or the good feelings which urges him to that extremity, to be applauded. It is evident, however, that the poverty must be hopeless, which can induce the Irish peasant in whom family attachment is so strong, to leave those who are nearest and dearest to him—his wife and his children.

*Roscommon, Par. Moore.* A. 390.—There are only two instances recollected of men deserting their wives and families; one was a labourer, and the other a tradesman, both went to America. Poverty drives persons into many crimes which they otherwise would not have been guilty of.

*Roscommon, Par. Boyle.* A. 358.—Women with families are never abandoned by their husbands owing to distress; there are in a few cases, other motives which may produce this result.

*Galway, Par. Tuam.* A. 363.—There are some instances of women with families being deserted by their husbands, but not many among the labouring classes.—(Archbishop *Tuam*.)

*Sligo, Par.* A. 393.—There are one or two instances, however, where men under the pressure of distress, have abandoned their families and not since been heard of. Their families are now confirmed mendicants.

*Londonderry, Par. Mayhern.* A. 393.—There are many instances where women with families have been abandoned by their husbands.

*Londonderry, Par. Drumachase.* A. 469.—Few parents or husbands intend to desert their families, but many, especially of late, have left to go in search of work, and never returned. They sometimes send for their families. Henry Greer knew two cases of total desertion in two years.

*Meath, Par. Clonard.* A. 406.—Mr *Langle* remembers two or three cases where it has occurred.

*Kildare, Par. Naas.* A. 400.—Mr *Hardy* states, during the cholera I was going along the road, and saw a woman lying in a ditch with six children round her; I gave her a drink of water and had her removed to the fever hospital, where she died in three days; this woman I knew had been abandoned by her husband, he not being able to get work, and not having the heart to see his family famishing.

*Kildare, Par. Naas.* A. 400.—Families are occasionally abandoned by men out of work, who cannot bear to see them starve.

*Carlow, Carlow.* A. 394.—In this parish there are no instances of husbands deserting the family on account of destitution, but in an adjoining parish one instance was told by *Byrne* to have occurred: a man deserted his family, a wife and four children, about four years ago; he could not get employment, and could not bear to see them starving around him: he had been industrious, the family became beggars.

*Carlow, Par. Tullow.* A. 396.—There are numerous instances of husbands deserting their families. *James Keely Mason* stated, that about a month ago my son-in-law, who was a blacksmith, finding himself without employment for five weeks, deserted his wife and three children, who returned to me for support.

It may be asked why widows do not, by industry, earn sub-



sistence for their families. The answer is, that considering the limited extent of employment, and the low rate of wages, a woman, particularly if she has a family of young children, cannot possibly maintain herself, much less a family, by her industry. Those who earn their subsistence are peculiarly circumstanced, and form a small minority. In farming there is not any employment for them, excepting during a few weeks in the Spring and Autumn, in sowing potatoes, saving turf, pulling flax, sheaving, weeding, and hay-making, which do not occupy more than two months; when some earn sixpence to a shilling a day. But those who earn such wages are generally peculiar for their strength and skill. Knitting and spinning are the only occupations which are general, and to be had throughout the year; at these occupations, however, the great majority cannot make more than  $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. a day, or 9d. per week. Till within late years the linen trade had always afforded a full subsistence to women. In many cases they could make by it more than a man could by field labour.

It mostly happens that a woman, when first deprived of her husband, retains the land he held, as well as a pig, and if he was a small farmer, perhaps a cow, or a horse. So long as she is able to pay the rent the land is not taken from her. In many cases, more leniency is shown towards widows in the payment than towards any other class. There are some instances in most districts of the landlord even granting a cabin, with a small piece of land rent-free, to the widows of the labourers, who had long been in his employment. In cultivating their lands, widows receive great assistance, as it is a common custom throughout Ireland for the labourers to assemble on Sunday mornings before service, on holidays, and before and after their own hours for working, to dig the plots of ground, and to get in the crops of widows. But with their utmost exertions and the assistance thus afforded them, widows are not often able to struggle for more than one or two years. They gradually part with the few things that remained at the death of their husbands, and when they cease to be able to pay the rent, their holdings are taken from them. Frequently when a widow is ejected, the neighbours build her a hut by the road-side, on the borders of a bog, or on waste land, and she at first goes from cabin to cabin, receiving a few potatoes or a meal from one, and a few potatoes or a meal from another. With the scanty assistance which their neighbours and relations are able to afford them, and by occasional donations from the trifling collections made at the different congregations, they

sometimes struggle against mendicancy till their children are old enough to assist them. Some who are particularly active and clever, turn to huxtering, others resort to the sale of illicit whiskey.

Keeping what are in Ireland termed Shebean houses is nearly confined to widows, who cannot otherwise earn a subsistence. They have no choice but to starve or to live by acts which are deemed by them disgraceful. To defraud the revenue is rarely esteemed crime by the poorer classes in any country. They avoid doing so only because punishment attaches to the act, and not because they deem it immoral. No one appears to be injured, and therefore it is viewed as distinct from theft, and of minor turpitude. According to Mr Miler, of Mayo, they think it "is more creditable to go into gaol for it than for theft, or to beg the world."

*Mayo, Parish Aughavale.* A. 121.—Mr *Large* goes on to say, if they can escape detection, dealing in illicit whiskey is a more profitable business than any other they can engage in. There is little reluctance to engage in it. It is considered no disgrace, and it must be a very tempting trade when, having been confined three months in gaol for the offence, they are found committing it again. Mr *Miler* says, the temptation is that they have no other means of earning their bread, and it is more creditable to go into gaol for it, than go in for theft, or to beg the world.

*Carisk Kilgrevar.* A. 124.—Mr *Evily* says, widows and wives sell illicit spirits: it is the only profitable employment an industrious woman can find.

*Burony Trawley.* A. 129. and 23.—Two of those visited were inhabited by widows. One of them who had six young children and an aged father to support, being questioned as to her means of support: "That," said she, pointing to a whiskey bottle, "is my sole dependence; I have no means on earth to keep my children inside the door with me, but to borrow 1s. from one neighbour or other, and buy a drop of poteen to sell again. She was all but naked, and stated that she had no other clothes than what she then wore, not even a cloak good or bad. She described herself and family as often not tasting food more than once in twenty-four hours, and not having even then a full meal. "I would sometimes" said she, "go out and beg, but I have no sort of covering for myself and children; we would be famished to death with the cold if we went with such clothes as we have."

*Kildare, Parish Kilcock.* A. 135.—None of the widows in this parish sell illicit spirits, but in Newton parish adjoining there are three or four instances of widows who keep Shebean houses. They are driven to the sale of illicit spirits: and this is one of the greatest nuisances in the parish, from which much vice proceeds.

*Londonderry, Parish Coleraine.* A. 181.—A few widows are remarkable for being driven to the sale of illicit spirits as a means of obtaining subsistence.

The description given of the physical condition of those who struggle against vagrancy proves them to be the most wretched of a destitute peasantry; they are, without exception, described by their fellow-parishioners "as being more miserable than any other class in the community;" as rarely able to procure more than two meals of dry potatoes in the day, frequently only

one, and never able to afford what is termed "kitchen" (buttermilk, herrings, salt.) His Grace the Archbishop of Tuam speaking of this class says, "the number of meals which they can afford to use may be averaged at two—nothing but dry potatoes. It is not easy to estimate the exact quantity of which each meal consists; it is, however, often in the long summer (as they say) scarce." Their cabins are generally the most wretched hovels in the parish; they are frequently so dilapidated as to admit the weather, and rarely contain a single article of furniture. Their beds are a little straw upon the ground, sometimes without even a blanket to cover them. Of clothing they and their children rarely possess sufficient for decency, more rarely sufficient to protect them from the cold, and many are nearly naked. Few, however, are able to struggle on; the largest number are, immediately upon their widowhood, driven to vagrancy, and tramp about the country, carrying some and followed by others of their children. (See widows with young families, Appendix A.)

The aged form but a small proportion of the vagrants—1st, Because they are mostly too infirm to move about; and 2ndly, Because it is held by the peasantry to be a sacred duty to support their aged parents, a duty which nothing but the most biting poverty seems to overcome. No act is considered more thoroughly to degrade the young, or more certainly brings upon them the indignation of their neighbours, than refusing food and shelter to their aged parents. In some parts of the country even the younger relatives will succour the aged should they be childless. Although this feeling in favour of protecting the aged is chiefly induced by a benevolent disposition in the peasantry, there can be no doubt that self-interest is an additional and powerful motive with them. By protecting their parents, they set an example to their own children. The first class of peasantry, those who hold more than five acres of land, are mostly able to maintain their aged parents. The second class—the "cottier tenants"—however, are frequently much inconvenienced thereby; and the women, fearing for the food of their children sometimes drive the parents of their husbands from their cabins. But the third class, those who hold under two acres, and do not possess regular employment, are rarely able to support the aged. The women and children of many of that class are beggars during a portion of the year; and the aged, concerned at diminishing the scanty fare of their children and their grand-children, and feeling that their own condition will be improved, sometimes voluntarily take "to the bag." Before this painful resolution can be taken by those who have



not been accustomed to beg in youth, many a severe struggle with inward pride has taken place. The children, by remonstrances, and not unfrequently even by force, attempt to prevent this degradation of their parents; a degradation, however, from which no peasant in Ireland can ever be secure under the present system. It is a very remarkable feature in the character of the Irish peasantry, that whilst all commiserate and speak well of those who have been driven to beg, they nevertheless deem begging disgraceful. Their sensitiveness on this point is remarkably exhibited in their unwillingness to admit that any persons of their district resort to vagrancy. They usually state, that if any beg, it must be when from home, and in search of work; and that the beggars in their district come from parishes in the neighbourhood, or from distant counties. This representation is in fact true, as none but the most depraved seem willing to beg where they are known. Those who live by vagrancy, when they return upon a visit to the places of their nativity to join their friends and relations, strictly abstain from asking alms. It is admitted on all hands, however, that those who consent to beg are better provided for than those who depend upon the precarious provision which their children possess. Next to the misery which those who are driven to vagrancy suffer, the chief evil in the existence of a large body of persons wandering about the country seeking alms, is apparently the heavy tax which it inflicts upon those who are scarcely a degree above themselves in condition. Did the support of the vagrants really fall upon the peasantry, the tax would be a greater evil than it is. But this cannot be the case, because they are compelled to give up, in the shape of rent, all but a bare subsistence. What is given to the beggar, therefore, is subtracted from rent, and not from the earnings of the peasantry. Upon the landlord the weight of this class ultimately falls; and it will easily be seen that vagrancy leads to a greater expense per head than is incurred for the peasantry who are living by industry. A beggar will usually gain more by begging than an able-bodied man can by industry; and during certain periods of the year, between potatoe digging and Christmas, very much more. Alms being principally given in potatoes, all beyond their consumption they usually sell or exchange, and procure tea, tobacco, and whiskey—comforts of which the peasantry rarely partake. Their surplus collections must be considerable, as many persons depend for potatoes upon the supply which they can purchase from vagrants. The witnesses in the parish of Castle Pollard, county Westmeath, said—

A woman who keeps a small shop in this neighbourhood, lately sold 300 stone of potatoes, which she had purchased solely from vagrants.

Vagrants sometimes meet together, and carouse upon the produce of their surplus collections, and many accumulate sums which would be large for an Irish peasant. It is very difficult to ascertain whether the number of vagrants is increased by the facility with which food can be obtained. Some of those who gave evidence were of opinion that persons resort to mendicancy as an easier life than industry; while some say that few willingly adopt that course, but that many who have been driven to it continue it from preference. Others again assert that all escape from it as quickly as possible. Those who have not formed an estimate of the value of the alms given to vagrants will be surprised at its amount. In the parish of Clonard, county Meath, containing 14000 acres, and a population of 5000; the alms-giving was calculated to amount to at least 700*l.* a year, or nearly 3*s.* a head upon the whole population, which is equal to the assessment in many parishes in England.

Though the relief of vagrants is not a tax upon the peasantry, they are severe sufferers by sheltering them. Their scanty apparel and small household articles are frequently stolen, which, though miserable and of little value, they are quite unable to replace. Fever, measles, small-pox, besides many other infectious and contagious diseases, are constantly spread through a country by beggars, who, as they rarely sleep more than one night in any cabin, rapidly communicate. It often happens that sickness is contracted by a peasant's family through housing them, which incapacitates the father for a long period, and entails continued distress upon all dependent upon him; and should he die, upon his wife and children, who must become vagrants. The moral evils arising from vagrancy are also considerable; vagrants are in the habit of conveying scandal from cabin to cabin, and messages, from one district to another, relative to outrages. They also entice away young females for the purpose of prostitution. As vagrants are continually changing from one part of the country to another, it is impossible to trace their personal conduct. All persons profess to be quite ignorant about the habits and character of those they relieve. No one, therefore, can tell how many of the children which any woman may have with her are illegitimate—whether the mother or her daughters are addicted to prostitution, or the male children to thieving—whether the father is alive, and whether he could obtain work, and whether they have been beggars from birth, or have been re-

duced by misfortune. Yet a knowledge of these circumstances is most important in determining the nature and extent of the evils arising from a large class of vagrants. As character is of no value to a vagrant, for no one seeks to know before he gives relief, and as the temptations to vice of every description must be great, there is much reason for believing that those who have long continued as vagrants lead a very immoral life. Wandering about the country, sleeping wherever they can obtain shelter, and seldom sleeping two nights in the same place, it is scarcely possible for those of the women who are in the least degree good looking, to avoid the temptations to which they must be perpetually subjected. It is generally stated throughout Ireland, that the proportion of illegitimate children is very considerable amongst the wandering females, and that prostitution is frequently the resource of widows, as well as of girls who have been betrayed and driven from their homes. This cannot be matter of astonishment, when it is considered that females cannot maintain themselves by honest industry, however well inclined, and consequently that even the wives and daughters of the poorest class are occasionally forced by poverty to yield to that mode of gaining a subsistence.

*Kildare*, A. 136.—The system of thus driving the mothers to vagrancy, and sometimes to prostitution, must have the greatest tendency to burden society with a number of indolent and vicious persons.

*Kildare*, 400.—Sometimes the women of the family are driven to prostitution.

*Carlow*, 395.—Often the females are driven to prostitution by their poverty. John Homan says, "I know a dozen instances of girls who were thus driven to prostitution."

*Carlow*, 396.—But the women and girls are frequently driven to prostitution.

*Longford*, 140.—The Rev. Mr O'D— said there were some instances of it.

*Longford*, 137.—The Rev. Mr M'Can states "the he has known widows, after having passed through the stages by private charity and by mendicancy, to have been driven by absolute want to prostitution."

*City of Cork*, 160.—Their necessities sometimes drive them to prostitution.

*Cork*, 442.—Even instances have been known of the daughters of decent fathers driven to street prostitution by poverty.

*City of Derry*, 473.—Prostitution sometimes arises in towns from distress; they "cannot starve," but nothing can compel to it in the country.

*Derry*, 471.—All agreed that the girls were often driven by distress to prostitution. "In fact," said Mr M'Cammon, "there are but very few of them who are not prostitutes." And destitution was believed by all to be the most common cause of this.

*Derry*, 185.—If the widow is young, she is sometimes led by begging to prostitution.

*Roscommon*, 388.—In some rare instances the women and girls are driven to prostitution.

*Galway*, 363.—Archbishop of Tuam:—"Whether women and girls be-



come prostitutes, when employment fails, or not, depends entirely on the temptation held out to them; if a person above their own condition will give money, or money's worth, for present relief, flesh and blood, or rather the cravings of nature, must prevail."

*Galway*, 363.—The Rev. Dr M'Hale:—"In reply to the question whether, when work fails the family, the females are ever driven to prostitution? Seldom or ever, except when hard-hearted, wealthy profligates, availing themselves of their property, contrive, after much importunity, to rob them of their virtue, and bring them to misfortune."

*Clare*, A. 423.—The Rev Mr O'Brien said, that though distress had sometimes been extreme in this parish, yet it has never been followed by one of the worst effects which had resulted from it elsewhere, that of driving the women to prostitution. He knew of no such consequence; but on applying to Sheils, the carpenter, on this point, who had been longer in the town than Mr O'Bryen, he said that, in consequence of the eviction of tenants at Mahanish, which has been above alluded to, three girls of the name of Moran came to live in Newmarket; one of them was the woman who was afterwards suspected of infanticide, and the other two have been or are prostitutes.

A powerful stimulus to population is another of the effects of the extreme importance of land to the peasantry, acting through a system of nominal rents.

The hopeless destitution in which the peasantry are kept by that system, convinces them that no exertion, no frugality on their part, will enable them to provide against destitution in their old age. They likewise know, that if, whilst able-bodied and in the prime of life, they can scarcely obtain subsistence, there is little chance of their gaining a livelihood by industry when strength shall have begun to fail them. The life of a vagrant is consequently the prospective old age of every Irish peasant, unless he has children able and willing to support him. Every prudent peasant in Ireland, therefore, marries whilst yet in his boyhood, that he may have children grown up before his strength begins to decline. With this view it is scarcely possible for him to marry too early, as the privations to which the Irish peasantry from their birth are subject cause them to become, when compared with the life of the English labourer, prematurely old. His children are the savings' bank of the Irish peasant. They are the only property which cannot be taken under the nominal rent. Thus, whilst excess of population is assigned as a cause of the miseries of Ireland, the strongest stimulant to early marriage is allowed to exist.

*Sligo*, 493.—And Dr Kenny said, "I think early marriages are most useful here; a man looks forward to be supported in age by his family, and thus often says, 'If God give us a family, they will support us when we are beyond work.' If a man marry at the age of 35, he will be broken down and unable to work before his children can be grown enough to support him, as a boy seldom gets more than half a man's hire till 18; but when a man marries young, his children will be able to support him before he is beyond his labour."

*Kerry.* 430.—It was the general opinion of those present, that the ordinary extent of employment would not support a labourer, even on potatoes, if he had a family to provide for. It was also remarked by Mr M'Ennery, that the poorer the individuals were, the more anxious they were to marry. He had observed the same disposition in France, and in other countries. This chiefly arose from the anxiety to have children to support them in their old age; and he often heard them express these very sentiments; women despairing of being married often get bastard children, with the very same view. It was his opinion that early marriages were the very strongest proof of the poverty of the country.

*Kerry.* 448.—A woman had an illegitimate child with a view (as she herself stated) of having "somebody to look after her when she was too old to take care of herself."

*Clare.* 417.—Mr O'Grady has heard it observed, when a destitute unmarried person has been seen begging, "What a fool she was not to have got married, and she would have had children to keep her from that line of life."

*Kildare.* 64.—It has never been assigned as a reason for women having illegitimate children, that they look to these children as a means of support in their old age; yet Mr Reilly states "that there are three instances in his neighbourhood of bastards supporting their mothers."

*Curlew.* 211.—Both sexes constantly assign as a reason for marrying, the wish to have children to support them when old, so much so, that James Neil thought he could recollect hundreds who have assigned it as the only source of being provided for in their old age. Rev. B. Johnstone corroborated this opinion, as he frequently heard in cabins parents telling their children that it would soon become their turn to support them in old age.

*Curlew.* 60.—Women often have illegitimate children at or after 40 years of age; and James Neil has heard beggars declare that when they could not get married, they had such children for the purpose of supporting them in age.

*Westmeath.* A. 411.—Persons are also induced to marry with the hope of having a family to support them when they have become old and infirm: as was said, "they consider that when they have brought up a family, they have made a provision for their old age." Formerly it was a certain provision, but now the difficulty of support is so great they are often obliged to beg.

*Donegal.* 465.—The poorer classes are invariably found more anxious to marry early than the more comfortable classes: the farmers, and those who are better off, do not marry until they have some little subsistence; those, however, who are very poor, are frequently heard to say, "We cannot be worse off than we are, and probably our children will be a great support to us."

*Londonderry.* A. 469.—The poorest marry the earliest, frequently from the the hope of having children to assist them in their old age. "I have often heard men say, that he who grew old without marrying, would rue it in the end; and it is a common remark, that they are better off who have children to maintain them.—(M'Ivor.)—"The poor think," said Morrison, "that any change must be for the better. Those who are better off, look for a fortune, and the farmers' sons always marry later than the labourer, and are more cautious." Millar, a beggar, said, "A poor man ought to marry young, that his weans may be able to assist him when he grows old."

The same system—that of nominal rents—which urges them to early marriage, also removes the obstacle which exists with other classes, and with the labouring classes of other communities, viz. the fear of losing those comforts to which they have been accustomed, it being scarcely possible for the condition of

the Irish peasant to be worse. The inability of a woman at any age to earn her own subsistence, makes her most desirous to be married. Women require a husband to maintain them whilst young, and children to maintain them when old. If a woman be without the one in youth, or without the other in age, the life of a beggar is the best she can expect. Parents are anxious that their daughters should be married, as they are a burthen to them whilst single, and can, if married, assist them in their old age. It is evident, therefore, that besides the usual motives to marriage, there are in Ireland many powerful additions. The peasant women constantly seek illicit intercourse, with the view of inducing marriage. Their chances of success are great. The clergy of all persuasions seem invariably to recommend (which is equivalent to enforcing) marriage in all cases of previous intercourse, provided the woman has previously borne a good character. "The clergy of all persuasions discourage early marriage, except in cases of pregnancy; but pregnancy before marriage is by no means uncommon" (*Antrim*). Should the injunctions of the clergy fail to induce the man to marry, the friends of the women frequently threaten him with violence, which threat is often successful. In case the persuasions of the clergy and the threats of the male relations fail her, the woman has still another resource—she swears, or threatens to swear, a rape against him. This practice seems to be extremely common in Ireland, and is mostly successful. In some cases men marry merely upon the threat; in others when brought before a magistrate, whose influence is usually exerted to induce them to marry. Some men do not yield till they are in prison; whilst a few do not consent till the trial has commenced, or even till the verdict is given against them. Many endeavours have been made to prevent the influence of this threat, but hitherto without avail. The only means of counteracting the practice whilst the single women of the labouring classes remain in so destitute a state, is to remove the punishment; but such a step would be yielding up the whole female population to every licentious vagabond in society, and would produce evils a thousandfold more terrible than those it might prevent. The fear of prospective want is therefore as fertile a source of incontinence, as present and pressing destitution.

*Mayo. A. 53.*—"Mr Lyons is confident that nine out of ten rape cases are fictitious,—got up merely for the purpose of forcing marriage; under this impression, a regulation has been imposed upon the Catholic clergy of this diocese, not to marry such parties while a prosecution is pending.

*Mayo. 52.*—Mr Cramton has known many cases of the father marrying the woman rather than pay the wages; he also says many prosecutions for rape



come before the magistrates, which are dropped on the marriage of the parties. "Nothing so common," he says, "as husband-hunting;" such cases are more frequent since some men have been lately executed for the offence; within the last six months at least six such cases have occurred in this district.

*Carlow.* A. 60.—Mr Singleton knows an instance which occurred this day, of a young woman and her parents threatening a man with violence if he did not marry her, and he has promised to do so.

The Rev. Mr Kehoe says, "It is usual with women, not only to threaten, but actually to swear a rape against the reputed father, in order to induce him to marry, and that on an average they succeed in their object in half the number of cases.

Mr Hawkshaw states two instances, as coming under his own knowledge within the last nine months. In the one the boy married the woman, but within four months subsequently deserted her. In the other, the man is in prison under the charge; but from circumstances which have transpired, very little doubt is entertained but that the grand jury will ignore the bill.

*Carlow.* 62.—Marriage is frequently induced from the woman threatening to swear a rape against the father. James Neil remembered ten cases within the last five or six years; one man, he said, did marry under such a threat, but soon afterwards deserted his wife; and he saw a young man who preferred going to Carlow gaol, rather than marry under the threat.

Rev. B. Johnston thought it was as common for a woman to act so, as for the sun to shine, and recollected many instances where marriage had, in consequence, actually taken place.

*Carlow.* 63.—In answer to the question whether it was usual for women to threaten an accusation of rape against the men whom they wished to obtain for husbands, Mr Archbald replied that it was "very common;" he knew a woman who had sworn to five charges; and no later than three months ago, a woman who was making application for wages observed, "Please your honor, I intended to have made a hanging business of it." The man who is accused was subsequently advised by his landlord to marry her.

*Kildare.* 64.—"I believe," says Mr Healy, "it is a very frequent occurrence for a woman to swear a rape against a man to induce marriage, and I remember two or three instances of such threats, but in none of these cases did it succeed; but I know two cases where it did succeed, and both men immediately after marriage absconded, and emigrated to America." Mr Kearny states, "A woman about last March, swore a rape before me against a man; he was arrested and sent to gaol; but she quitted the country, and did not prosecute; for anything that appeared before the bench, it was supposed her inducement was money."

During the two centuries ending in 1796, in which the Poor Laws had existed in England, it was always considered that they had been the means of checking early marriages. It was supposed that the proprietors of the land, from the fear of having to support, through the Poor Laws, a larger body of labourers than their lands required, had prevented early marriages by reducing the number of habitations. The ground for this supposition was merely that the population of Ireland had increased more rapidly than the population of England. I do not believe that such an effect could be produced by such means. If it could, why were not these means resorted to during the last thirty years? The late inquiry in Ireland has

shown that the Poor Laws in England, during the first two centuries, did check early marriages; not in the manner supposed, but by removing one of the chief inducements to them—the fear of destitution in old age. During the last thirty years,—viz. since the scale allowance system was introduced into their administration in 1796,—the Poor Laws became a prolific source of early marriage, as they made a large family the condition upon which the labourer's comforts in early life could be increased. Though the good administration of Poor Laws, therefore, had checked early marriage, the mal-administration had been as great an incentive to them in England as the total absence of a public provision had been in Ireland.

It will naturally be inferred that as the great anxiety for land, and the system of nominal rents, through which it operates, are so extensively injurious, some check to their influence would have been devised, were they not beneficial to some class. But singular as it may appear they are injurious to all. The landlords are those to whom they may be supposed to be advantageous, but to no class are they more injurious.

The landlords of Ireland are constantly charged with drawing enormous rents. Making allowance for the difference between the English and Irish acre, the latter being nearly double the size of the former, and for the superior fertility of the land of Ireland, the rent received by the Irish landlord is less than that obtained by the English; but looking to the comparative ability of the tenantry to pay, the Irish rental is unquestionably excessive. The following opinion is expressed by the Rev. Charles Clarke, of Beccles, Suffolk, who has farmed extensively in that county for many years, and was one of the Assistant-Commissioners:—

F. 213.—If the quality of soil be alone regarded, it may be safely asserted that the rents are not so high as in that part of England with which the English Assistant Commissioner is more particularly acquainted; but, if the agricultural knowledge and skill of the occupiers be taken into consideration, a much higher value is set upon the land than they are fairly competent to pay.

The entire dependence of the peasantry upon land and the nominal rent system, to which it gives birth, act most forcibly in depressing agriculture, an evil which reacts upon the landlord, by diminishing his receipts, and upon the peasantry by diminishing employment. The system of nominal rents deprives the holders of the land of the means of tilling it, and of all motive to skill and exertion in its cultivation.

In the evidence upon agriculture, remarks upon the want of skill and enterprize in the great proportion of the pea-

santry are of constant recurrence. A little reflection must convince every one that a system of nominal rents would deprive the peasantry of the means to improve, and of the chance of deriving benefit from such improvements as they might make; and consequently that they would become apathetic. The Assistant Commissioners who visited the county Cavan, say—"Major Bayley, a gentleman of experience, and a magistrate, stated publicly, that agriculture was "in the most degraded state possible; nowhere in the world "could it be worse." Expressions to the same effect were made in every part of Ireland, by the most intelligent of the gentry, and nowhere more frequently than in the provinces of Ulster and Leinster, which provinces are certainly the best cultivated districts of the country. In these remarks the gentry are fully supported by the reports of the Assistant Commissioners, Scotchmen and Englishmen, practically acquainted with the agriculture of Great Britain. The Assistant Commissioners visited some of the farms in each Barony, for the purpose of personally inspecting their condition, and made their statements therefore from observation, with the advantage of having previously held a public examination of a large body of the agriculturists of the district, including landlords, farmers, and labourers by whom they had been informed of all those circumstances which they would require to know previously to forming a correct conclusion.

To obtain land, the peasantry not only bid rents which the land could not enable them to pay, even though farmed under the advantages of skill and capital; but they submit to every species of extortion from those by whom the land is possessed, or by whose influence it can be obtained. It is common for them, in order to obtain possession of a farm, to pay half a year's or a year's rent in advance, by way of temptation to the person who can give them possession. In the North of Ireland it is required of the incoming tenant that he shall assume the arrears of rent left unpaid by his predecessor; and if any one of the competitors can pay up the arrears upon entering, he is certain of preference. In some instances the interest of the wife or sister of the person who can give possession of the land, or of the wife or sister of his agent, is necessary to the success of the applicants, and must be bought. To obtain this, every bidder offers the largest sum which he can command, knowing that he who fees highest is the surest of success. Thus bribing the agent in the shape of fees is another mode by which the peasant is deprived of his trifling property. Besides the permission of the landlord or his agent, the sanction of the out-



going tenant must also be often purchased. The risk of death which every one incurs who enters upon land without the sanction of the outgoing tenant, compels those who are about to succeed to purchase this sanction. So established is the usage, that those who have land to let in Ireland rarely refuse as a tenant the person to whom the outgoing tenant has sold the good-will. The death of the incoming tenant and the death of the landlord, or the destruction of his property, would be the effect of resisting this practice. In England such a custom would be considered as infringing upon the rights of the landlord. No doubt can exist that the landlords of Ireland do not possess the power over their land which is enjoyed by English proprietors; and this is one of the many consequences arising from the peasantry being forced to combine against the law, in order to preserve their existence.

The limited control which the possessor of land in Ireland can safely exercise over it, frequently thwarts the intentions of those who are anxious to raise the condition of their tenantry. Many landlords with the view of improving the condition of their tenants, let their lands at rents, which leave to them a comfortable subsistence. Their benevolent object however soon becomes defeated; those who are seeking land offer to those who hold under such landlords, considerable sums for possession, though there is no lease to transfer—sums equal to the value of the difference between the required and the ordinary rent for such land. It is true that each tenant may upon leaving obtain the sum that he gave upon entering, but in the meantime he is deprived of the capital requisite to his farming operations. Whether it be the outgoing tenant or the possessor of the land who must be bribed, he who offers the largest sum is the most likely to succeed, and the brisk competition induces each to bid to his last farthing. Many in their eagerness bid even more than they possess, and endeavour to borrow the deficiency from their friends. The result of this pressure upon the peasantry is to render the occupant of a farm a bankrupt before he takes possession. He must have gone through an ordeal, in which he is deprived of those means which, if spared to him, would generally be far too small to admit of his farm being rendered even moderately productive. If the tenant however retained some small means upon gaining possession, it would soon be required to meet the arrears, which must quickly arise, his rent being greater than the produce of his farm can pay. He could only hope to retain that which he might be able to conceal, and if he conceal his capital, of course it cannot be applied to his farm.

It often happens, that the peasantry possess small hoards of money, although their lands might be rendered far more productive by the application of capital. As to the peasantry being able to accumulate, it is evidently impossible, as they rarely have sufficient to pay the rent of their farms, though they confine themselves and their families to a barely sufficient quantity of the cheapest food.

*Connaught. Galway* F. 132.—It is usual for the agent, or the wife, sister, or clerk of the agent, to expect a compliment from the tenant on the signing of the lease. The money is not afterwards allowed in the rent: others receive from one, two, three, four, or five guineas.—(Mr Birmingham.)

*Leitrim.* F. 37.—Whatever a man may have he will not be such a fool as to lay it out on his land, unless he has a long lease, or even to let his possessing it be generally known. There are landlords who, if they knew that their tenants were making money, would think that they had their land too cheap, and would soon find a way to do themselves justice.—(Rutherford.)

While things continue so the state of agriculture must necessarily remain depressed, and the produce must be confined to what the spade of the labourer, unassisted by skill, can produce.

F. 145.—On several estates, the agent's fees of one shilling to the pound are paid by the tenant, in addition to his rent. The Rev. Mr Geraghty, P. P. states that the extortions of the agent's drivers are felt more severely; the tenant fears to refuse the demands which they make, and which are raised according to the circumstances of the farmer.

*Mayo.* F. 40.—“A cottier tenant who may by any accident possess a little money, may be tempted to bid a higher rent; but he is more likely to make a present to the agent, in order to obtain a preference as a tenant.”—(Gibbons, Kearney, and the Rev. Mr Feeny.)—Sir S. O' Malley says that “all the landlords of this barony are aware that small tenants cannot accumulate capital.”

*Sligo.* F. 43.—Mr O'Connor says that several persons have told him that they would improve their lands, and build houses, but they could not trust the middle-men, from whom they held. “They hadn't as much fear of the head landlord.” So long as the tenants have not capital, or are unwilling to apply it to their land, agriculture must remain in the rudest state, and production not exceed what mere manual labour can extract from the land.—(Mr Dodwell.)

*Leinster. Dublin.* F. 44.—A year's or half a year's rent is sometimes offered by the tenant, in advance, as an inducement to the landlord to set him the land. It is not, however, the custom to require this as security for the payment of rent, nor is it voluntarily offered, except by small occupiers to middle-men, in order to obtain a preference. The tenant is obliged to erect his house and buildings, make fences, drains, &c., entirely at his own expense; the cases in which landlords have been known to assist a tenant to build even a house being extremely rare.

152.—Exorbitant charges are sometimes made for leases by way of agent's fees. The sum charged seems to be extremely various and unsettled. One of the witnesses paid £3. for the lease of 12 acres of land; another, £5. 5s. for the lease of 15 acres; a third, £2. for the lease of 10 acres; and a fourth £6. 10s. for 34 acres. Sometimes the wife, sister, or clerk of the agent requires a compliment on the signing of the lease, but this is not frequent. One witness stated, that he had to pay the agent a guinea to obtain a lease; others said, they had to perform gratuitous services for the agent, such as drawing turf, &c. When the agent is a lawyer, he sometimes charges an exorbitant price

for the lease which he draws up. It is almost always usual for the tenant to pay agents' fees five per cent., in addition to the rent. One instance only is recollected of the proprietor or any of his family requiring a *compliment* on signing a lease: this was the wife of a proprietor; she in one case required £60. for obtaining a lease; she actually received £50. though the tenant never got the lease or his money back.

*Kilkenny.* F. 45.—When a small tenant gets money he thinks he can never lay it out quick enough in land; he not only bids the higher rent for any land that may be vacant, but he is always ready to give money in hand to the landlord by way of fine, or to any other person for his interest. Fines equal to half the fee simple value are commonly given for the good-will of small holdings of a few acres, even where the rent is beyond the real yearly value.—(Messrs. J. Kelly, Cahill, and Delany.)

“Whatever it arises from, the people are certainly very unwilling to discover their real circumstances, and look with suspicion on any one who seeks to enquire into them.”—(Mr M’Henry.)

F. 47.—“I am afraid that they deem it of importance to them to assume an air of poverty, fearing that a greater portion of the nominal rent would be exacted from them. It is common to see the houses of considerable farmers display as little cleanliness or attention to appearance as the cabins of the poorest labourers, whose means will not allow of better.”—(Messrs. Splint and M’Henry.) Their being without the hope of ever possessing more than a bare subsistence, undoubtedly operates to produce and continue reckless habits among the peasantry.

156.—It is very common for the agent, or some relation or dependent of his, to require a compliment from the tenant on the signing of his lease. The amount is left to the tenant himself, but he understands that, if he does not give out liberally, he will be looked upon as a suspicious character when the rent-day comes round.—(Mr M’Henry.)—“It is sometimes given to the agent, sometimes to some member of his family; it varies in amount from £2 to £10, but it is not near so high as it used to be.”—(Mr O’Connor.)—“Pin-money to the lady of the proprietor was always expected in former times.”—(Mr M’Henry.)—“And to my knowledge is expected still in some cases.”—(Mr Cronin.)

Mr. Walker thinks, that if a cottier tenant happened to be possessed of a little money, he would be willing to pay a part of that money as a fine for a small holding, and, besides, pay such a rent as would leave him nothing but a bare subsistence.

*King’s.* F. 48.—It is not common for the landlords to require part of the rent in hand, as security, before he admits a tenant.—Mr Gleeson, however, says that he knew an instance this year in Kilcommon parish, where a new tenant had to deposit £100 (half a year’s rent) in his landlord’s hands, which sum was to be allowed in his rent before he left the farm.—Mr Walker says that there are cases in which new tenants lend money bearing interest to the landlord, but this is not considered as a deposit of rent. These two last observations, however, apply to large farmers, and do not affect the case of small farmers. These latter, though they do not pay rent before hand, often pay so much as a fine to get possession of a farm as to straiten them considerably in capital for the management of it, which of course reduces their chances of succeeding. The tenant’s capital is also absorbed in buildings, fences, drains, &c.—Mr Walker says, that tenants almost universally make and repair all the buildings upon farms; that he only knows one exception, in the parish of Aucon, where a landlord has built a number of farm houses of a superior description for his tenants.



The high rents, caused by the great competition for land, operate in some degree in preventing the accumulation of capital among the small tenantry; but, in many cases, their poverty is increased by their own negligence, for men doing moderately well may be seen on high rented land, where others are in great poverty.

*Leinster, King's Co. F. 158.*—The fees upon leases of land held under the Courts are high. The tenant pays £10. 10s. to the master for the lease, which payment is not made to private landlords.

With regard to capital among small tenants, Mr Odum says that when a small farmer has any little money, he always bids the higher for land; in fact he bids the last farthing, and leaves himself without as much as would stock a rood of land. He likewise stated that, in the case of underletters, a sum of money is often given in hand, but not in the case of the great proprietors; so that the tenant frequently wants the capital necessary to purchase stock and implements. With regard to the accumulation of capital among the small tenantry, or the possibility of the farmer's making money now, Mr Walsh states that there is not one shilling in the farmer's hands now for every pound formerly, even 10 years ago.

*F. 49.*—And Mr O'Connor corroborates this opinion by saying, "that the farmers are all losing; it is in the landlords' power to put them out on the road in every part of the country." The observation of Mr Odum, as to the possession of capital by the tenantry, was, "The landlords have taken it all with them." With regard to the concealment of money among the tenantry, lest they may be called on for more rent, Mr Odum observes, "In truth there is no concealment of money, for there is no money to conceal. The nominal rents which have been kept up have done incalculable injury. A heavy arrear hurts industry; it is a chain round the farmer's neck that prevents him from using his hand." It was everywhere apparent through the barony that the want of sufficient capital caused the cultivation to be kept in the rudest state; and it was stated that the land was exhausted by efforts to make large rents without adequate capital to cultivate the land.

*Louth. F. 51.*—High rents, and putting the erection and repair of buildings and fences, and all improvements on the tenant, are chief causes of the absence of capital.

Tenants seldom have the means of making adequate improvements, and even when they have they will not improve much, unless they are secured by a lease against a consequent rise in their rent. The consequence of all improvements being thrown upon the pauperized tenantry, unaided by any assistance from the landlords, is that the agriculture of the country is kept in the rudest state, and production is confined to whatever the personal exertions of the tenantry, unaided by skill or capital, can force from the land.

*F. 160.*—Payments are made to agents, exclusive of rent, only where such has been agreed on, and mentioned in the lease; tenants are not harassed by law proceedings, but only by exorbitant charges on leases. It is suspected, that the relatives or clerk of the agent require a *compliment* on the signing of the lease, and it is pretty well known frequently to happen: but it is done with great secrecy; it can seldom be proved.

*Queen's Co. Bar. Maryborough. F. 57.*—It is common for middle-men to require a year, or half a year's rent in hand, as a security before they admit a tenant, but this the head landlords very seldom do.—(All.)—It is, however, very common for landlords to require incoming tenants to pay up the arrears of outgoing ones. Mr Mosse and others knew a case in one of these baronies, where the tenant, having been ejected for arrears of rent on an estate, the incoming tenant had to pay £300. for arrears of rent before being admitted. Nathaniel Chevers (farmer) knew another instance on the same estate, where

he himself was security, and the incoming tenant had to pay the arrears of the outgoing one. Whenever this paying in advance occurs, the tenant becomes to a great extent destitute of the means, already insufficient, of purchasing stock, implements, and seed. It is generally impossible for the tenantry either, under such circumstances, (or, if all but a bare subsistence for the tenant and his family be given up to the landlord,) to accumulate capital or retain any little which may accidentally arise to them; besides which, the practice of throwing the expense of the erection and repairs of buildings and all other improvements upon the impoverished tenant, tends above all things to diminish and absorb his already insufficient capital.—(N. Chevers, and all farmers.)

F. 168.—Tenants are harassed, not by “*canting*” of land, but by exorbitant charges for leases.—(Mr John Dillon and Mr Sutheran.)—Mr Dillon has known £7. 7s. to be charged upon a stamp of from 10s. to 15s., where the charge should not have exceeded £1. 10s. to £2. Mr Martin never heard of such imposition here. Mr Sutheran knew a case where the tenant gave £20. for the lease of 40 or 50 acres of land. Many of the witnesses had heard of such compliments being given to the wives of agents by others, but could not specify particular instances, as those things are always kept secret.

*Bar. Portnahinch.* F. 58.—The tenant is seldom afraid to expend his capital, if he has any, on the land, unless towards the close of a lease, or when only a tenant at will; and he fears that his landlord will avail himself of his improvements to demand an increased rent, and if he refuses to give it, to eject him and let his land to another.

F. 170.—Tenants are harassed by expensive fees on leases.

Agents, their relatives, or dependants, very seldom require compliments on the signing of leases here; when such compliments are given they are generally in money, and perhaps about 25 per cent. on the rent.

*County Meath. Bar. Kells.* F. 54.—The real causes of the tenant being destitute of capital, or afraid to apply it, are the want of a knowledge of an improved style of farming, and of assistance and encouragement to make improvements by landlords, who, instead of that, generally rack the highest rent they can exact from their tenants: the cultivation of the country is thus kept in the rudest state, and the production confined, in almost every case, to such as can be forced from the land, without the aid of skill or capital.

F. 164.—Tenants here are not harassed by law proceedings, nor by “*canting*” of the land, but by exorbitant fees and charges on leases, and other indirect modes of exaction which the tenants dare not complain of. The under-agents sometimes take a *compliment* to give the tenant a preference; this they receive in all ways and to all amounts, chiefly in money, though sometimes in services.

*Bar. Moyferriagh.* F. 164.—The tenantry are much harassed by expensive leases. The Rev. Mr Tute, P. P., has known a lease of 100 acres to be charged 21*l.*, and Mr Barnwall knew 13*l.* to be charged for one of 76 acres, and several others proportionably high.

It is very general for the agent, or some of his family or dependents, to require a compliment on the signing of leases. It is given in money, or in cows, horses, services, &c., and the amount depends on circumstances.

*Wicklow.* F. 173.—Agents are paid 5 per cent., exclusive of the rent; this, however, is an understood charge, and specified in the leases, but most exorbitant sums are frequently charged for leases. The law agent of one proprietor charges 4*l.* 4s. for filling up a lease, exclusive of the stamps. One witness was charged 9*l.*, and another 13*l.*, for the lease of a few acres of land.

On the signing of a lease a compliment is almost always expected either by the agent himself, or by his wife, or by both. Three years ago a tenant on an estate in this barony gave 20 guineas on getting a lease for 15 acres, and on another estate 100 guineas were given for a lease of 130 acres. Tenants are also in the habit of grazing the agent's sheep in winter, of carting his turf and hay, and making him other presents.

*Munster, Co. Kerry. Bar. Iveragh. F. 62.*—Mr James O'Connell says, "If any man who had a good character as a landlord had land to let, he would get almost any money as a fine that the offering tenant possesses. I think, however, that such tenants make a calculation for their own advantage. They think they have bought a sort of claim on the landlord's consideration, and they think he must grant them some advantages which they mean to ask, or he must lower their rent, or remit arrears, instead of turning them out of the land when they cannot pay their rent. I once let some land to a man who had paid me a year and a half's rent in advance, but he managed in such a way that he sometime after owed me more rent than any of his neighbours, and in the end I lost one year's rent more by him than by the others who had land with him. I had a repugnance to turn him off the land because he had paid me at first in advance."

In many other parts of the county it is common for a landlord to require a year or half a year's rent in hand as security before he admits a tenant; but it seldom happens in this barony.—(Mr Butler, Mr James O'Connell.)

As to the cause of the poverty and want of capital among holders of land, Mr Mahony says, "I think high rents a reason for the poverty of the farmers." Mr Butler says, "I should account for it by their own bad farming, and by their holdings being so small."

It sometimes happens that men possessing a little money endeavour to conceal it by affecting an exterior of great poverty. Mr Mahony says, "There are not many instances." However, Mr James O'Connell says, "When runs have come on different banks, many wretched-looking men have come and demanded gold for 10*l.* or 20*l.* I have known other cases where farmers would not improve, and when they have obtained leases have immediately found money to make great improvements." Mr Fitzgerald says, "I have often asked farmers why they did not make certain palpable improvements, and they have answered 'We have no leases, and may have our rent raised, or may lose the land.' But I have known very few instances where rent has been raised, or the farmer turned out immediately that he has made improvements."

"The rude state of agricultural cultivation arises chiefly from want of capital."—(Mr James O'Connell.)

*Bar. Truckenackmy. F. 63.*—"If he could get land by paying a fine with his money, he would certainly do it; he would not leave himself unable to work the land, but the possession of money would make him both desirous and confident of getting land, and that being nearly the only means of employing it. It would also induce the landowner to take him as a tenant, and probably let him land on moderate terms. It is not common for the landlord to require half-a-year's rent in advance, but a farmer sometimes offers it as an inducement to a proprietor to let him have land."—(Mr Sealy.)—"Tenants having capital do not give such fines as would incapacitate them from working the land. Landlords generally build or allow for building farm-houses and sometimes the mearings; tenants in general build all the smaller outhouses."—(Messrs Sealy, Powell.)—"Small farmers never have had much capital; they certainly pay more for their land than those who hold larger farms. Small farmers, like small tradesmen, are, in general, the worst and poorest of their class."—(Mr Sealy.)



"There have been a few instances here, but no more than there are cases of misers among all other classes, of persons possessing capital and striving to conceal it."—(Messrs Meredith, Fitzgerald.)—"Farmers often try to appear to their landlords and to their neighbours to be as poor as they can, for the purpose of getting their land low."—(Mr Sealy.)

F. 181.—"When proprietors receive their own rent they do not require agents' fees in addition to rent, but on signing leases the agent, or the family of the landlord, often require compliments."—(Mr Sealy and Mr Powell.)

*Limerick. Bar. Conello.* F. 184.—"I never heard of a proprietor receiving agents' fees in addition to rent; some require compliments on signing leases; I have heard of a landlord receiving 50% on signing a lease."—(Mr Brown.)

*Bar. Conello.* F. 65.—"I have known many instances of small holders taking land and possessing money, and losing it all through the rent being too high, but it cannot be affirmed that there ever was capital amongst the small tenantry as a body."—(Mr Brown.)

"I think there are a few instances of tenants with an exterior of great poverty possessing property. They would hide their real circumstances, if rich, and without a lease, lest their landlords should think that they had too good a bargain in the farms. The same feeling I do not doubt would prevent them from improvement."—(Mr Brown.)—"The want of capital is one cause of bad cultivation."

*Bar. Coshlea.* F. 66.—If a cottager by accident obtained a little money, he would be very willing to sacrifice it for the purpose of getting possession of land. Mr Coote says, "I have known a man who was anxious to get land pay a person who held an acre and a half as a tenant at will 20% to transfer the possession of the land to him; the rent of the land was 2*l.* 8*s.* per acre, which was at least its full value." In some cases the landlord requires half a year's rent in advance before admitting a tenant to a farm, but this is not generally done. A tenant not unfrequently proposes such an arrangement to a proprietor to induce him to let a farm; when this advance is accepted, the tenant frequently becomes destitute of the means of purchasing the necessary stock, implements, or seed. Some landlords refuse to take fines, knowing that the land must suffer if the tenant's means of cultivating it properly are lessened. Farm-houses and other buildings are in most cases erected by the tenants. The landlord of one large estate is assisting his tenants to erect buildings.

Some years ago, when farmers had more money than they now have, some were prevented from applying capital to land, by the fear that a larger portion of rent would be exacted, but at present the application of capital to land is not prevented by this cause; the tenants are unable, if they had the will, to lay out money.

F. 187.—The witnesses cannot say whether it often happens that a compliment in money is given by a tenant, on the signing of a lease, to some member of the agent's family; but the general belief is, that doing so would be useful to the interest of the tenant. On the signing of a lease it is very common for a present to be made by the tenant to some member of the proprietor's family.

*Tipperary.* F. 69.—It is the practice of the landlord to require half a year's rent in advance before admitting a tenant, the amount to be allowed in the last half year. The payment of such advance, in almost all cases, leaves the tenant destitute of whatever insufficient means he might otherwise have of purchasing stock, implements, and seed. Of course, if all but a bare subsistence for the tenant and his family be given up to the landlord, it is impossible for the farmer to accumulate capital.

Instances might be brought forward of tenants possessing property who keep up an exterior of poverty, but they would be very rare.—(Hanley, Herrick, and Kennedy.)——Such persons have also been afraid to improve their farms. The motive to this conduct was an apprehension of being made to pay a larger rent. Mr Roe states that there are instances where tenants are afraid to build offices and make other improvements through the fear of the landlord putting on an extra rent. The same gentleman mentions a curious circumstance which he heard, that Baron Pennefather, being caught by rain, went to different farm-houses on his own property trying to borrow a great coat, but every farmer denied possessing one.

F. 190.—When proprietors receive their own rents they do not exact any fees in addition. It is stated that they require compliments on signing leases. Mr Phelan says that this practice is not general.

*Waterford Bar. Decies without Drumm.* F. 70.—The witnesses think that if a cottier tenant by accident gets a little money, he is willing to offer it as a fine or premium in order to get land. It sometimes happens, although it is not the general practice, that the landlord requires half a year's rent in hand before admitting a tenant; that sum remains sometimes in the landlord's hands, until the last half-year, and in other cases a part of it is allowed in the rent of each year until the whole is repaid. The practice is not sufficiently general to reduce materially the amount of capital applied to the cultivation of land.

*Ulster, Armagh.* F. 73.—“The tenant becomes impoverished and unable to purchase sufficient stock, not by paying rent in advance, but by purchasing land at a high rate, and borrowing part, which often leaves him short.”—(Barney Halley.)——“When he has reduced himself to the necessity of purchasing on credit, he will have to give 6*l.* 6*s.* for a cow, may-be that's not worth more than 4*l.* 4*s.*, and so on that way.”—(Paddy Farrell.)

*Cavan.* F. 73.—In order to get land, which is the only means of procuring a livelihood here, a cottier tenant gives any money he possesses, and borrows more if he can get it on credit. It is not common for the landlords in this district to require any portion of the rent in hand as a security previous to the admission of a tenant; but the established custom is, that the tenant coming into possession must pay up the arrears of the former tenant. By this practice the tenant, in many cases, undoubtedly becomes destitute of the means, already insufficient, of purchasing stock, &c. Relative to the possession of money acquired by the industry of the tenants, Mr Duggan, a farmer, said, that, as to money, it would be a rich townland in which you would get 10*l.* upon Christmas-day, after the rents are all paid. Some farmers who have old leases, and who have made money formerly, are thus enabled to give it for the tenant-right of a farm to settle their sons on; but, after paying two or three rents more, money will be as scarce with them as with other people.—(Mr Duggan.)

F. 198.—It is usual on the estates here for the tenant to pay the agent fees in addition to the rent. On the signing of leases it is always usual, besides the price of stamps, to give money by way of compliment to the agent, or some member of his family.

*Down. Iveagh.* F. 75.—Very few tenants have good purses. “If I was on my oath, I don't think there is 10*l.* with any man in my townland; the loss of a cow or two, or of 10*l.*, would either ruin a man, or make a man rich that got it; 'twould make a gentleman of him in a manner.”—(Morgan.)

*Fermanagh.* F. 200.—The under-letters, however, let at a higher rate than the chief landlords. It is the general practice here for the agent, his wife, his sister, or his clerk, to receive a *compliment* in money on the signing of the lease. It was publicly stated, that on the estate of one of the two

principal proprietors before alluded to, the rate of this *compliment* is a year's rent. Mr Charles Summerland, farmer, said, "My father-in-law gave it."

*Tyrone*. F. 78.—Considerable sums are given in this barony for the tenant-right of small farms; this was put forward by Mr Auchenleck as a proof that rents were not too high, and that the pressure on the farmers was not too severe; but to this construction several farmers at once objected, and said that they were obliged to give anything for a holding to get their families into, even though they must anticipate a failure by taking the farm at so high a price; and in proof, they mentioned cases of men who purchased farms at very high rates, and within five years ran away in debt. "It is not common for the landlord to require a portion of the rent in advance as a security before he admits a tenant; but sometimes a man likes to make an appearance of solvency, and will offer money in hand though he may want it very much to carry on the farming."—(Mr Quin.)—"The tenant who pays in advance often has to borrow a part of the purchase-money, besides borrowing money for stock."—(Mr Rogers.)—"It is certainly impossible for the tenantry, under such circumstances, to accumulate capital."—(Rev. Mr M'Sorley, R. C. C.)—It was often repeated, "that the small tenants make nothing but a mere living."

Many men are afraid to improve their farms for fear a greater rent would be exacted.—(Mr Quin.)—"The more general cause of keeping the agricultural cultivation of the country in the rudest state is that the small tenant has not the capital to apply; but even if he had, he would not be willing to do so, for fear of increasing his rent."—(Rev. Mr M'Sorley, R. C. C.)—In this district the production is certainly confined to such as the personal exertions of the tenantry, unaided by skill or capital, can force from the land.

F. 202.—Mr Auchenleck stated that it was usual for agents to receive money on the signing of leases. As well as the Assistant Commissioners could find out, the general sum among the small tenantry is from 5*l.* to 10*l.* for the signing of leases.

The Rev. Mr Gordon says that he has repeatedly known 30*l.* or even 50*l.* to be given for the renewal of a lease.

As to the landlord accumulating all that the tenant would have accumulated—the motive to accumulation in the two classes is very different. The income of the peasant is chiefly dependent upon his skill and industry; any accident of body or mind might leave him destitute; his death might leave his wife and children destitute. He is, therefore, naturally anxious to provide against contingencies which, from their probability, he feels to be of great importance. He has a further motive daily urging him; his exertions would be more productive if he possessed more capital. The income of the landlord does not depend upon his skill or industry. If he become suddenly idiotic or paralytic, his income need not necessarily be reduced, nor the present or future comforts of himself or his family. That sum which the peasant would be imprudent in expending, because it should form his reserved fund, might most prudently be expended by the landlord in the shape of rent, because it would form part of his annual interest, the land being the capital from which it is derived.



The feeling of avarice is rarely so strong as the fear of penury. The desire to live in a better manner than that to which we have been habituated is very much weaker as a motive than the dread of being compelled to live in a worse manner; the desire of rising is less strong than the fear of falling. The accumulation of capital in agriculture, therefore, does not take place to any considerable extent. The occupier of the land cannot, and the proprietor of the land will not, accumulate. It is indeed greatly to be feared that a nominal rent-roll has lead many proprietors into difficulty: their expenditure having been regulated rather by the rent-roll than by actual, or even probable receipts.

*Galway.* F. 36.—The evil effects of high nominal rents are not confined to the tenant, who necessarily falls into arrear; the landlord is tempted (according to Mr Armstrong) to adopt habits of expenditure which are not authorized by his real income.

“He is anxious to have a high rent roll,” observes Rev. T. Maguire, P. P., “that he may borrow money with greater facility, and to more advantage; I refer more particularly to one landlord in this country who has been ruined, and who has been obliged gradually to mortgage his entire property, having been unwilling to alter his mode of living or to make abatements in the high war rents, which he found it utterly impossible to collect.” Such a man cannot indulge his tenantry; he sends his driver to distrain for what cannot be paid, and if the tenant wish escape complete ruin, he must bribe the driver, and, perhaps, after a lapse of some time he is distrained by another. I know a landlord who openly allows that his tenants cannot pay more than two-thirds of their nominal rents, but still he cannot open his heart to reduce them to the real value. Several witnesses assented to this statement of Rev. T. Maguire, P. P., adding that they knew the persons to whom he alluded.

*Sligo.* F. 42.—The system of nominal rents leaves it uncertain as to how much the landlord may collect; it leads him to hope for more than he is likely to receive, and thus tempts him to greater expenditure than he can afford; such is the case with the largest proprietor in the county.—(Rev. Mr Brennan, P. P.)—His property is greatly in arrear; he lives partly on what he receives, and partly on what he expects to receive.—(Rev. Mr Yates.)—In answer to the question, whether, when thus driven to distress, the landlord is frequently compelled, in self defence, to rack the tenantry? Sir A. Creighton said, “If your landlord be in debt, he will let you—the tenant—go to the bad sooner than himself.”

*Dublin.* F. 44.—The landlord himself, by this system of nominal rents, is deluded into the hope of collecting a larger amount of rent than he can possibly realize; and, being thus tempted into greater expense than he can afford, is driven into distress, and frequently compelled, in self-defence, to rack his tenantry.

*Kilkenny, Bar. Galmoy.* F. 45.—“The system of nominal rents leads the landlord into greater expenditure than he can afford. A landlord lives up to what I promise him, and not to what I pay him; if he gets 75 per cent. he is very lucky in my opinion, and I believe he would think so himself, too, if the truth were known. Where the landlord has to pay heavy interest on mortgages, he, of course, cannot afford to spare his tenantry, and if the property be taken out of his hands altogether by his creditors, the ruin of one party is very likely to be followed by the ruin of the other.”—(Captain Delaney.)

*Bar. Gowran.* F. 48.—The witnesses believe that in this barony, the landlords do not generally suffer from the system of nominal rents; though elsewhere, by making the amount of their income appear greater than it really is, it tempts them into an expenditure they cannot afford, and involves them in consequent embarrassment.

*Louth.* F. 51.—In many cases, the system of nominal rents is as injurious to the landlords as to the tenant, leading him to expect an income which he cannot realize, and thus tempting him into a greater expenditure than he can afford. This is especially the case with young proprietors before they are well acquainted with their real income, and have been taught to discriminate between it and the nominal rent-roll. The landlord thus involved, must often harass his tenantry in self-defence.

*Meath. Kells.* F. 53.—The system of nominal rents, constantly leading the landlord to hope for more than he can possibly collect, is no doubt one of the causes that so large a proportion of the landed proprietors live beyond their income, and there is no question that they are thus often compelled, in self-defence, to rack the tenantry; they will generally rather do so than want themselves.

*Bar. Moyfenragh.* F. 54.—It was stated by the witnesses that the landlords themselves are sufferers from the reckless competition for land among the peasantry, that a system of mere nominal rents is thus established, and the landlord, being deluded into the hope of receiving more than he can possibly collect, is tempted into an expenditure greater than his real income can afford. This the Assistant Commissioners found to be a matter of constant occurrence, especially among young, inexperienced, and thoughtless proprietors, until sad experience teaches them the real amount of their incomes, and to discriminate between a nominal rent-roll and an actual income.

*Queen's Co. Maryborough.* F. 57.—The system of nominal rents does not in these baronies tempt the landlord into a greater expenditure than he can afford, but in many others it certainly has the effect.

*Wicklow.* F. 60.—The system of nominal rents, produced by the reckless competition for land, is very injurious to the landlords themselves, by tempting them to exceed their real income, and thus leading them into embarrassments, which frequently compel them in self-defence to rack their tenantry.

*Kerry Iveragh.* F. 63.—“If a landlord is a distressed man, his tenants certainly feel his necessity to have money.”—(Mr Butler and Mr James O'Connell.)

*Bar. Trugheneckmy.* F. 64.—“There are many instances of landlords in distressed circumstances being very indulgent to their tenantry; but probably in most cases needy landlords try to get the greatest income from their estates that they can.”—(Mr Powell, &c.)

*Limerick Connello.* F. 65.—“Undoubtedly when a landlord is driven to distress he is frequently compelled, in self-defence, to rack his tenantry. An extravagant landlord might be tempted to spend more than he could afford, from a hope of collecting more rent than was possible; but thinking men could not be led into such an error; they have now had too much experience of the fallacy of such hopes.”—(Mr Brown.)

*Tipperary.* F. 70.—The system of offering very high rents has the effect of leading the landlord to hope for more than he is likely to receive, and sometimes perhaps to expend more than his real resources justify. Whenever a landlord is in this way driven to distress he is compelled in self-defence to rack his tenantry.

The poverty in which the majority of the occupants are kept, and the disinclination of those who possess capital to

apply it to the improvement of their farms, cause production in Ireland to be materially crippled.

The peasantry frequently have recourse to inferior seed, because they possess none other, and are too poor to purchase. They are decided in the choice of a crop, not by the chance of its being the most lucrative, but by the seed which they possess. In seasons of scarcity, they are driven to eat their seed potatoes, and to leave their lands unplanted till the proper season has passed, because they are unable to replace the seed which they have consumed. Land is frequently left under inferior cultivation, and crops are left in or on the ground, till the best opportunities for securing them have passed away, because the occupier has not the means of hiring sufficient labour. It is even common amongst the small holders to prepare and send to market one portion of a crop, to obtain funds with which to secure the remainder. With animal manure the peasantry are rarely provided in the quantity required; as they can neither afford to purchase it, nor the live stock and fodder capable of creating it; and though limestone is frequently plentiful within a few miles of lands greatly in need of lime, poverty and the nominal rent prevent the necessary outlay. The implements of husbandry possessed by the peasantry are both scanty, and of the most inferior description. Their ploughs are frequently of the rudest sort, made by themselves, and having a wooden share. Screening and winnowing is frequently performed in the open air, by which the grain is imperfectly cleaned, and even sometimes mixed with gravel. Land continues to yield inferior crops, and to be limited in its application, on account of defective drainage. Tracts of bog, which from their nature, their situation for drainage, and their proximity to limestone and clay, might be reclaimed, remain useless, because the tenant cannot, and the landlord will not, afford an outlay, which would be amply repaid. The best dairy possessed by one small farmer was a chest containing dirty linen, in which the bowls of milk were put to cream; the best churning room possessed by another was a smoky cabin; whilst in many instances the high road, on which a sheet had been placed, formed the most suitable threshing floor. Permanent improvements, as draining, fencing, and the erection of farm buildings, are not attempted. The peasantry are too poor to undertake them, and those landlords form rare exceptions who either undertake repairs and alterations, or make any allowance for them when made by the tenant. In many parts of the country, the peasantry are wholly ignorant of the modern improvements in agriculture; for example, of the rotation system and sheep husbandry. But the few who are aware of their



advantages, not having a motive to improve whilst under a nominal rent, nor being able to procure the requisite manure, implements, stock and seed, with which to commence that system, might as well be without the knowledge. Without cattle to eat green crops and to tread fodder into manure, the rotation system cannot be adopted.

Even if these things were not essential to the improved system of agriculture, the Irish peasantry could not adopt it. The course which will, on the average of two or three seasons, give the largest return, may not in each half year yield the largest rent, upon which the peasant depends to retain possession. Rearing stock supposes the ability to wait during two or three years for returns. Crops which can immediately be converted into money are those to which the peasantry by their poverty are restricted. Hence the universal practice of growing many crops of grain in succession, a practice which has long been discarded in the better practice of agriculture, because it exhausts the land. The only variation from successive grain crops is occasionally potatoes or flax, which exhaust equally with grain. Prevented as are the peasantry by their poverty from administering even an ordinary quantity of manure, this scourging practice quickly exhausts the land; when exhausted, it is, to use the phrase of the peasantry, left "to shift for itself," by which is meant, to throw up a coating of spontaneous grasses or weeds. In this condition it remains wholly unproductive for two or three years, at the end of which time it partially recovers its powers, and is made to undergo another course of scourging. Under this practice a considerable portion of the land is always idle.

*Galway. Kilconnel.*—On a farm of four acres, it may be said that one half is always in a condition of complete exhaustion. In the first place, the holder, having no green crops to enable him to feed cattle in confinement, has not sufficient manure each year for even one acre; he therefore continues repeated corn crops, till the land will produce no longer: it is then left for an indeterminate space of time to send up whatever weeds may grow in it, until it acquires a new skin. In this condition it supplies the appearance of food for a cow, and perhaps two acres of the whole is in the state described.—(Comyn, Donnelan, and Lynch).—The real cause of this state of things is ignorance of better practices, and want of capital, even if instruction were communicated.—(Birmingham).—Not only are small farmers reluctant to employ labourers for those purposes for which they themselves or their families do not suffice, but, when labouring under high rents, they prefer obtaining the lowest ready money wages, in order to meet rack rents, to bestowing their attention on their own tillage.—(Comyn and O'Reilly.)

*Connaught. Galway. F. 204.*—The fields are very imperfectly cleaned of weeds, some of them not at all, and from the grain being universally sown, and never drilled or dibbled, the use of the hoe is entirely prevented; the sowing of the crops is attended to at the proper time.—(Mr A. Lynch).—

If the small farmers can procure labour in hurried times they will, at any season of the year, neglect their own matters for the sake of it; and in this way often act contrary to their own interest.—(Mr Birmingham).—The peasantry often defer planting their potatoes beyond the proper time, from their anxiety to take advantage of all the employment they can obtain from others in the busy time of spring, and this partly accounts for some of the potatoe crops not yet appearing above the ground.—(Mr Birmingham.)

205.—The peasantry have no knowledge whatever of the advantage to be derived from a proper alternation of crops; any deviation from the course before mentioned would be a matter of curiosity.—(Mr Comyn).—There are no artificial grasses cultivated by the small holders; they generally, after repeated cropping, allow their land to “run to waste,” as it is termed, and, on that account, their lands are covered with the worst grasses.

208.—They, with few exceptions, never have any place set apart as a dairy. The house of a considerable farmer was visited; he is the occupier of more than 50 acres, of which 10 are in tillage; he has three milch cows, sometimes so many as 20 heifers, and a horse for which he has refused 50*l*. He is considered altogether as possessed of a capital of 400*l*. A request was made to be shown the room where the milk was placed to stand for cream; after some hesitation a press was opened, where stood a deep dishful of milk, surrounded by a quantity of foul linen. The farmer, when told of the ill effects which this would produce on the milk and butter, replied, “We use it ourselves, and sure we don’t fault it.”

The small landholder is seldom able to collect a sufficiency of manure for the land he occupies. A portion of the straw is consumed by the cow, another is used for repairing the thatch, so that little remains to be converted into manure; some are obliged by poverty to sell it. An occupier of five acres of land, under a middle-man, was last year obliged to sell the straw of an acre of wheat (all he had) to Lord Clonbrock for 1*s*. per cwt., in order to make up the money due on a promissory note given for rent.—(Mr Birmingham).—The farmers possess no knowledge whatever of the superior advantage of stall-feeding over grazing, as a source of manure. But little attention is paid to the dung yard; the small farmers collect some bog earth, but they do not mix it with a sufficiency of manure to cause a proper fermentation; the larger farmers are very careless about it. “It is common practice to sell straw; Mr Connolly frequently used to sell straw, even when extensively engaged in tillage.”

*Leitrim, Bar. Dromahair.* F. 210.—With respect to the course of tillage used in the district, Mr Nixon says, “We have no system; every man tills according to his fancy or convenience; we know nothing of a rotation.” The usual course pursued is two successive crops of potatoes, followed by as many crops of oats as will yield any return. In most cases two or three are taken; but instances were cited where eleven, and, in one case, nineteen were taken in succession. A very small quantity of flax is grown after the second crop of potatoes. On coarse or bog ground frequently three crops of potatoes are taken. “After they have by these means taken the life out of the land, it is suffered to lie waste.”

The peasantry do not neglect cutting their own crops by seeking labour elsewhere, they are too anxious about them to do so; but it often happens that many of those who live chiefly by labour, have not seed to put into the ground till they have earned it by labour, and on that account the planting is put off to a disadvantageous period, and till the proper time has passed.—(Mr C. Fergusson.)

F. 211.—The peasantry have no knowledge of the advantages to be derived from an alternation of crops, as is fully proved by the course pursued;

they only think of exhausting the land as much as possible, by the frequent recurrence of the same sort of grain, and then allowing it partially to recover itself by remaining a few years in grass. There is no stall-feeding of cattle, and artificial manures have not been introduced. Were green crops cultivated, there can be no doubt but a much larger number of cattle might be reared than under the present system.

F. 212.—Mr Nixon knows of no reason to which he can attribute the superiority of the Dutch to the Irish butter, unless it is caused by cleaner habits.

A large quantity of the land wants draining, and this circumstance operates together with the great moisture of the climate in making the land improper for sheep. Mr O'Donnell says he has not had any sheep for the last three years; the last he had were all affected with flukes in the liver, which are the precursors of rot, and on that account he has discontinued keeping them; very few farms in the district are fit for sheep; the small farmers are incapable of draining from want of capital.

213.—The cows are housed during the winter in close low sheds, very imperfectly constructed; but in the small holdings they are very frequently admitted inside the cabin during that season, as being warmer. There are no places set apart as dairies; the milk is generally kept in one of the bed-rooms, where it stands till the period of churning arrives. In the summer season, especially in warm weather, it is sometimes removed to the cowhouse or stable (which are then unoccupied) on account of the greater coolness, and there is nothing to guard it from the dirt falling from the thatched roof, or to prevent the vessels, &c., from being soiled by the damp and earthen floor. These places are generally without any opening, except the door, for the admission of air.

The farmer makes no provision for agricultural implements, none being used but the cart; the log is used instead of a plough; he looks to the crop of potatoes alone for the maintenance of his family.

*Mayo.* F. 215.—“The usual course of tillage may be stated as follows: first, potatoes, two crops of which are taken if the soil be very good; second, oats or wheat, if it be good land; third, potatoes, manured with sea-weed, if on the coast, in the inland parts with a mixed compost of mud and clay; fourth, oats or barley. A small quantity of land (say from one to two roods) of the best quality on the farm is usually sown with flax, but the former course of tillage is pursued without deviation till the land is worn out, and will not yield sufficient to satisfy the farmer. It is then thrown out of tillage.”—(Mr Toole.)—“More than a quarter of the farm is usually in a state of waste, affording a miserable pasturage for the cow; the small tenants do not generally keep more than one or two sheep, if so many.”—(Rev. Mr M'Manus, R. C. C.)

There is not a roll in the barony, with the exception of those belonging to Lord Sligo. The holdings being so small, and the farmers having so little employment, considerable attention is paid to the weeding of corn and potatoes; they do not seem to eradicate them at as early a stage as needful; the operation is deferred till by their continuance the weeds have considerably injured the growing crop,—this is especially the case with the potatoes. “I have known people to neglect their own crops to earn something, through the pressure of want.”—(Rev. Mr Dwyer, P. P.)—“Darby Hester lives at Carabane; he was working with me for Mr Mahon, and he allowed his potatoes to go to blossom without having been moulded, to his great loss, rather than leave the work.”—(John Dane, of Westport.)—“That is not a solitary instance.”—(Rev. Mr M'Manus, R. C. C.)

*Connaught.* *Mayo.* F. 216.—The peasantry have not the slightest knowledge of the advantages of the alternation of crops.



The small holders don't cultivate artificial grasses; they do not sow grass-seed the last year when they intend to put their land out to tillage, but they allow it to run to waste.

218.—The farmers have no knowledge of the benefit of stalling cattle, as a source of manure; but little attention is paid to the dung-heap: the straw is generally eaten by the cattle, which greatly shortens the quantity of manure, and the method of mixing it with large quantities of bog mould, as practised in other districts, is not extensively or systematically adopted here.

*Sligo.* F. 220.—Some attention is paid to weeding the corn crops during their growth, but the farmers are not aware of the benefit of rolling the land, and there are consequently but few rolls in the barony; they generally defer cutting the corn till it has become dead ripe, by which delay it becomes thick skinned, and the sample is greatly deteriorated in appearance and in the produce of flour. The Rev. Mr Brennan, P. P., says, "I do not think the peasantry defer cutting their own crops at the proper season, except when prevented by being obliged to do duty-work."—Terence M'Gowan says, "he had often been obliged to leave his own ground waste till he had earned money to buy seed for it, and the late sowing had proved a great loss to him."—"Many is the man," answered Robert Greggs, "that in the month of June has to go to work to earn the county cess, and neglects his own labour because the cess comes when the potatoes should be planted."

221.—"The small farmers sell all their corn; but few are able to reserve sufficient for seed; when they can do so we consider them well to do in the world."—(Rev. Mr Brennan, P. P.)

On farms of the largest size, the most usual mode of cropping is,—potatoes followed by as many crops of oats as will make a profitable return; after the land is exhausted by repetitions of this course, it is allowed to lie waste. On the smaller farms, and where the population is thicker, they cannot allow it to do so, and the alternate course of potatoes and oats is pursued with the aid of sea manure for an indefinite period; this is said to have prevailed on some lands for 40 or 50 years without intermission. The peasantry have no knowledge of the advantage of an alternation of crops; when spoken to on the subject, they reply, that they cannot afford to lose a crop.

222.—The inferiority of the butter in this district is most probably owing to the want of cleanliness, and of airy and well-ventilated rooms as dairies, and to the small number of cows, which makes repeated churnings necessary to fill the firkin.

225.—The houses occupied by the dairy farmers differ in no respect from those belonging to other farmers in the district. They usually consist of two, or, at the most, three rooms, the centre being the kitchen, at each end of which there is a bed-room; one of these also serves the purposes of the dairy, it being a rare thing to find a room set apart for that purpose; when it does occur, it is generally detached from the house; in either case there is not a ceiling to the roof, but it is quite open to the screws and thatch. If there should be a window, which is not always the case, it is generally closed with a shutter, which of course does not admit the free passage of the air; and as the floor is not paved with bricks or stones, but consists of the bare earth, it is impossible that water could be thrown on it for the purpose of cleanliness, or for that of cooling the dairy.

*Leinster. Dublin.* F. 228.—The English Assistant Commissioner must here observe that this arises from the defective mode of farming pursued here, and not from any necessity, even under such circumstances, for laying land permanently to grass, since as much stock, or more, may be bred or fed, by means of green and root crops, on a farm entirely under tillage, as on a grazing one of the same extent, independently of the excellent crops of grain

which always follow the cultivation of green and root crops, and the manure they produce.

*Kilkenny. Galmoy.* 232.—It frequently occurs that the peasantry, in their anxiety to earn by labour, defer the cutting of their own corn, and thus incur considerable loss: it is a common practice for small occupiers to leave their wives and children to cut and harvest their own corn, while they go out to work for others.—(All.)—It often happens that the peasant defers committing the grain to the earth until a disadvantageous time, sometimes owing to the want of seed, sometimes the want of horses, and of a sufficient number of hands to get the work done in a proper time, as well as from the motive of working for others when they can get employment at fair wages.

233.—A given quantity of land would, by the introduction of green crops for feeding, rear a much greater number of cattle than it would under the system of perpetual grass; besides, there would be an immense advantage derived from that system as a source of manure, and as a means of furnishing employment to the labouring classes, both in cultivating those crops, and in attending upon the cattle which consume them. All these results have been long established by the practice of the best agriculturists in almost every part of the United Kingdom, and still more extensively so by that of all the farmers in Flanders, and most districts in Germany, France, Italy, and other countries on the Continent.

Much of the land is incapable of rearing sheep, through want of drainage.—(Capt. Delany.)—A small farmer can very seldom afford to drain.—(All.)

234.—Among the poorer farmers the cattle-houses and sheds are in some cases insufficient, both in extent and repair, even for the small number of stock which is found upon those farms, and they would be very much so if the cattle were as numerous as they might and should be. Poverty has, however, greatly reduced the number of live stock among the smaller farmers, and many are obliged to resort to taking in the cattle of others to graze during summer, and to letting out their land for a “free crop” of potatoes (that is, giving the use of the land rent-free for a crop of potatoes, in consideration of its being manured for that crop), from the want of cattle and other means to manure it, and frequently even to till it themselves.

234.—The small holder is always greatly deficient in animal manure, from the want of pasture to keep stock, and of straw to make manure, as so much of his straw goes for thatching his house and buildings.—(Messrs Murphy and Ryan.)

No knowledge exists of the advantage of stalling cattle over grazing them, considered as a source of manure, except among the large farmers.

*Kilkenny Gowran.* 236.—There has more particularly been a large increase in the quantity of every kind of agricultural produce brought to market for export to England, because the increasing poverty of the farmers and labourers obliges them to live more and more upon potatoes, and to sell almost the whole of the meat, corn, butter, &c., which they consumed formerly.—(Lord Carrick and Messrs M’Henry, Lanigan, and O’Connor.)

236.—The peasantry are seldom or never induced to defer the cutting of their own crops that they may earn by labour; and, though they are sometimes late in sowing, it is not occasioned by this cause, but by the want of seed, waiting for horses to till their ground, &c.

239.—The small farmers neither drain nor can afford to drain, and this is the case now with most of the larger ones also.—(Messrs Robbins, Clifford, Splint, and Ryan.)

Except among the large farmers there is usually a great deficiency of proper accommodation for the cattle in these sheds and houses.

*King’s Co.* F. 245.—The sheep in this barony are subject to die of the rot, and the small farmers are unable to drain their land.

*Louth.* 247.—The quantity of land now devoted to grass, if used in producing green and root crops for feeding, would rear or fatten probably four times as much stock as at present, and would furnish employment to ten or perhaps twenty times as many persons in cultivating the crops, and attending to the stock, besides so amazingly increasing the manure as to cause progressive improvement in the fertility and consequent productiveness of the land.

248.—A few small farmers drain, but the majority of them cannot afford it. In one small district of the barony, but only in that, sheep are peculiarly subject to the rot, and in this case it arises from the want of drainage consequent on the absence of capital among the small tenantry.

249.—The small landholder is not often able to collect sufficient manure for his own ground, but he has probably as much, in proportion to the extent of his land, as the larger farmer.

*Louth, Dundalk.*—The soil of the barony is generally dry and sound. There are, nevertheless, many spots which might be drained and reclaimed, or much improved with profit. The farm-houses, out-buildings, fences, and almost everything connected with the business of the farmer are also here, as in other countries, much in need of improvement. But that it should be otherwise, except in a few individual exceptions, is impossible under the system generally pursued in this country. Exorbitant rents are required, usually the highest which unlimited competition and the fear of utter destitution can induce the unfortunate tenant to bid rather than give up his farm, knowing the difficulty of getting another, and that the same competition in every case awaits him. Next the landlord throws upon the tenant the whole of the expense of erecting and repairing the dwelling-house and out-buildings, and of draining, fencing, and all other improvements, however extensive and permanent they may be, and without any reference to the length of his term in the farm, instead of doing these things at his own expense, allowing to the tenant the half of the last, furnishing him the materials, or paying him for all permanent improvements at the end of his term, as is customary in England and Scotland. Such a system, and the ignorance of rural affairs of most lordlands and agents, their want of superintendence and interest, and the pecuniary embarrassments of the former are not only sufficient to account for the defective state of agriculture in this country, but it is surprising that matters should not be worse, and the Irish farmer deserves much credit for having stood ground, and effected even what he has under such discouraging circumstances.

This is not only the result of my own observations and inquiries, but it is the decided opinion of the most intelligent and experienced individuals whom I have met with.

*Queen's County, Maryborough.*—There is also a very large quantity of land, which is rendered comparatively unproductive, by the want of draining, and that would pay well for that improvement. In both cases, however, the poverty of the tenants, and the absence of encouragement, and assistance from their landlords, prevent these great and obvious improvements from being effected. The same may generally be said respecting farm-houses, buildings, fences, private roads, &c., the cost of erecting, making and repairing, which, as well as of all other improvements, is put upon the tenant, without any aid, allowance, or compensation from the landlord, either at the time of making improvements, or whenever the tenant may quit the farm, however expensive and permanent the nature of those improvements may be.

The natural consequence is, that the generality of farm-houses and out-buildings are extremely defective in proper accommodation, either for the family, or for the business of the farm, very injudiciously and inconveniently arranged, and usually in a bad state of repair, and damp, dirty, and miserable;



from the want of these accommodations, and the frequent absence of all system and regularity, scramble and confusion, accompanied by a proportionate waste of time and labour, are too often perceptible in the business of the farms.

Almost the only exceptions to the foregoing descriptions are to be found in the case of *large farmers of considerable capital, and who have a long lease of their land at a moderate rent.* All the farmers complain bitterly of high rents, especially the smaller ones, who hold under middle-men. There is no doubt that all rents here are much too high, considering the usual want of capital, and defective system of farmers, and particularly under the present depression of prices.

The system above-mentioned, of throwing all improvements, repairs, &c. upon the tenant, amounts, of course, also to a virtual increase of rent, and that too in the very worst shape, because it diminishes, and often totally absorbs the already very deficient means which he possessed for the cultivation of his farm.

The want of a proper rotation of crops, and of the cultivation of clover, vetches, rape, turnips, mangel-wurzel, &c., is still more disastrous in the effects upon the cottiers and other occupiers of from one to two acres of land. These poor families are toiling on in hopeless misery, themselves, their land, and their live stock, all exhibiting every symptom of wretched destitution; while the mere adoption of a proper system would enable them to live in comparative comfort and happiness. The Assistant-Commissioners found them everywhere buying hay, and putting out a single cow to grass with a neighbouring farmer, although with good management their land would have supported three or four.

*Meath. Bar. Kells. 252.*—The peasantry often defer till too late the cutting of their own corn, in their anxiety to earn by labour; but this is the case only among the very smallest occupiers of land. The peasantry also often sow much too late, which almost always arises from their having to wait for the farmers' horses to complete the tillage of their ground. Small occupiers can seldom lay their land down to grass for more than one or two years, and often not at all, their chief or sole crops being potatoes and corn. They have little or no knowledge of the advantage of an alternation of crops, and seldom or never cultivate artificial grasses.

The small holders are frequently deficient in money to procure seed, for which they are then charged a very high price.

252.—The number of labourers employed on a grazing farm varies much according to the state in which the fences are kept, whether the land and hedge-rows are kept clean, &c. If the farm be well kept up, from two to three men may be constantly employed for every hundred acres; *but if these things are neglected (as is generally the case here)* the rate of constant employment would only be one man for every hundred acres, or even much less, as several witnesses stated was the case.

253.—Where drainage is required, the small farmers cannot afford to drain to any extent, for want of means. Artificial feeding is not general. Potatoes and hay are the only food upon which cattle are stall-fed, except the patches of turnips and mangel-wurzel grown by a few proprietors. This kind of artificial feeding is at present on the increase. The small farmer has too little capital to keep stock enough to produce a sufficient quantity of manure for his own ground, but in this respect he is generally on a par with the larger farmer.

*Bar. Moyfenragh. 257.*—The witnesses were of opinion that it would be much more profitable to feed and convert land to grass. It must, however, be remarked that this is speaking of tillage as it is pursued in

this country, and not as it is carried on in Great Britain, where, by means of turnips, clover, and other root and green crops, the tillage farmer maintains and feeds more cattle than the grazier, and where, consequently, his produce being part grain, and part cattle and sheep, prices would not affect him, since he would gain by one description of produce what he lost by the other. If the difference in profit between tilling and grazing went on increasing as it has done of late years, the consequence would be total ruin either to the labourers or to the farmers; to the labourers if all the land were laid down to grass, and to the farmers if they did not dare to lay the land to grass, for fear of putting an end to employment.

258.—Artificial feeding is not common, though increasing. Hay is commonly abundant on all farms, but in consequence of the uncertainty of the climate, and the bad system of making it, the quality is very precarious, and often very indifferent. Store cattle during winter are put at night into straw yards, with or without sheds, and generally turned into the fields during the day. From the universal deficiency of out-buildings there is seldom or never good cover for cattle.

*Co. Meath.*—He was fully convinced of the beneficial effects of sheep husbandry, both in profit to the farmer and improvement to the land, by means of turnips; and that the soil and climate of this district were well adapted for that system; but he feared that, independently of national and local prejudices, very few farmers had sufficient capital to adopt it. In such an extent, he added, did this unfortunate want of means prevail, that several extensive farmers in his own neighbourhood were at that moment (1st September), thrashing out their own corn as fast as it could be carried from the field, in order to be enabled to pay for the harvesting of the rest of the crop.

There is a considerable extent of land at present either lying entirely waste or yielding an almost nominal produce, which might be profitably reclaimed by means of draining and sewerage.

An extensive farmer, who from his own occupation is intimately acquainted with every part of the barony, told me that he considered there were at least 1000 acres of exhausted bog (from which the turf has been cut for fuel), and other bog land capable of such improvement. Limestone, marl, and calcareous gravel, or sand, are formed in almost every part of the barony; so that capital and enterprise only are required to bring the land into productive cultivation. This, however, is almost impossible to expect any tenant to do, under the existing system, with rents on the one hand much too high for the present price of grain, especially with their insufficient capital, and imperfect mode of cultivation; and on the other, with the total absence of assistance from their landlords to make permanent or expensive improvements, and with the erection and repairs of all houses and buildings thrown upon them, the resources of the peasantry soon become entirely exhausted.

*Kells.*—As elsewhere, there is much need of draining farm-buildings, and other permanent improvements, but it is impossible they can be made by a tenantry so generally poor, as long as the present system continues of throwing the whole expense on the tenant, added too, as this is, to rents, exorbitant in proportion to the capital and mode of farming of this country.

*Kerry, Iveragh.*—Mr Fitzgerald says, a proper quantity of seed is usually sown, where the ground is sown; but land is sometimes left unsown from inability to buy seed.

In the Spring of the present year potatoes were dear and scarce, and there are many pieces of ground in the neighbourhood that have been dug and manured and made ready for seed, but where potatoes were not set from the inability of the occupiers to purchase seed. They had been obliged to consume the potatoes which they meant to set, and were too poor to buy seed

at the advanced price ; all their money went to buy food. Ground intended for oats is sometimes left unsown, because the small farmers cannot buy seed.

I think it happens two or three times every ten years that small holders are deficient in money to buy seed. This year, much ground is unsown for want of seed. Small tenants more generally buy their seed at a high price, having but seldom potatoes enough to save seed.

*Cork : Parish Killeagh.*—The high rents which are paid, cause the farmers, in many cases, to be unable from want of capital to conduct ordinary operations. Mr Davis states that they are frequently obliged to have their potatoes undug for a long time, in consequence of being unable to pay their labourers.

*Limerick, Bar : Connelloe.*—Mr Brown says, I saw this morning a man mowing his hay, and his children employed in making it ; the man had a considerable quantity of meadow-ground, and I questioned him why he did not get more assistance to cut his hay and secure it. He said it was very tedious to save it entirely with his own family, and that he ran a great risk of having part of it spoiled by the weather, as it would take him so long to secure it with so few haymakers, and they all children ; also that the grass would be much injured by getting too old and over-grown before he could mow it all, but that he must bear this and run the risk of the weather, because he could not afford to hire labourers to help him, as he had always done in former years. He said in these bad times he must find ways to work his land without hiring labourers—with what should he pay his rent ?

*Tipperary. Middlethird.*—The poverty of the small tenants prevented them both from using good seed, and from manuring sufficiently, and their want of skill and system led to the exhaustion of the land.—(Mr Saily).—There are many instances where the land is inadequately cultivated, because the holder cannot hire sufficient labour.

After the ejection of small tenantry, the land is left in such a state that it requires an outlay of capital and much labour to put it into proper farming condition.—(Mr Stewart).

*Fermanagh. Tyrkennedy.*—The cultivation is of the worst kind ; the causes are to be found in want of skill, want of capital, and want of encouragement.

The small farmers live miserably, and the produce is not near as great as it might be, there being among the farmers the want both of skill and capital.

The small farmer preserves little, if any, corn for his own use. The knowledge of the advantages of stalling over grazing exists with many, but the practice is not adopted in consequence of the depressed state of the tenantry.

The usual course of crops pursued by the farmers on the old plan is—1st, oats ; 2nd, oats, potatoes manured—oats sometimes, and not unfrequently potatoes, are taken as the first crop, and as many crops of oats follow in succession as the land will produce ; 3rd, oats ; 4th, oats—flax sometimes follows potatoes, and sometimes the first crop of oats. After the fourth year the land is either manured or limed, or they allow it, according to their own expression, to “lie out to rest ;” if it is manured, it is cropped again for several years as before, or if it is let to rest, it remains in that unproductive and resting state for two or three years, as they say, “shifting for itself,” without any grass being sown, and they allow that it affords them scarcely any grass the first year, very little the second, and not much the third. The appearance of the pasture fully confirms this statement.

The farmers are of opinion that the incapacity of the land to rear sheep is to be attributed to the want of drainage. A small farmer cannot afford to drain his land, and gets no encouragement from the landlord to effect this improvement.

There is much wet land in this district. Impediments to draining are



occasioned by the want of capital and knowledge, and by the unwillingness of landlords to give assistance.

The houses of dairy farmers are all in a miserable condition, and the butter is made up in smoky apartments.

The farmers complain that no reduction has been made in the rents; they are obliged to pay the last shilling. The rents are kept up in consequence of the great competition for land. Although there is plenty of limestone in the barony, there is scarcely any of it used, owing to the great poverty of the tenants.

The rotation is 1st, potatoes from ley; 2nd, potatoes repeated, with some manure; 3d, wheat, flax, barley, or oats; 4th, 5th, and 6th, oats; 7th, potatoes manured, and go on again as far as they can. Not much wheat is grown, and is of inferior quality. If they have a field in ley likely to yield a better crop, on which they can exercise the scourge system, they leave the land they have deprived of its productive powers to come round by time for a repetition of their future operations. Very little clover is grown, no rape nor turnips, and no stall-feeding in summer. Their miserable pastures are full of weeds in place of grass, and land is mostly cultivated with the spade. A man with sixteen acres did not plough any of it, having ten or twelve acres in crop. The plough, when used, is frequently a rude instrument, made by the farmer himself.

The neglected state of these baronies is much to be regretted, having such ample natural means for improvement by fall for drainage, stone, lime, marl, and bog, and a soil, if drained, capable of bearing good wheat, barley, clover, turnips, and other green crops.

*Monaghan*.—The inferiority of the grain in this district is caused by the number of weeds which grow up in the crops, and the want of proper machinery for winnowing and screening their grain. It is not uncommon to thrash in the field, and winnow in the open air by aid of wind alone, the grain having an admixture of gravel. The wheat cannot be expected of so fine a quality when grown after potatoes as if on naked fallow.

*Tyrone. Omagh*.—Many of the farmers are ignorant of the cultivation of turnips, clover, rape, or mangel-wurzel. Some of them say they are aware of the advantage they would receive by these plants, but they are too poor to get lime, manure, or seed, to begin the system. Their plan is to grow a succession of oat crops (sometimes five) after potatoes, till the land can no longer produce, and in that exhausted state it is left to rest, as they term it, till it is ready for a repetition of this scourging process. The pasture afforded in the interim, left as it is, in many or most cases, to spontaneous production, is poor in the extreme. Some few sow a little white grass (*polens lanatus*); rye grass and timothy grass are sown in a very few instances, and a little clover.

There is not the slightest improvement of late in the breed of sheep; the farmers are ignorant of there being any other breed in the world, and even if they were aware of the existence of any other breed, they are too poor to get them.

The more general cause of keeping the agricultural cultivation of the country in the rudest state, is, that the small tenant has not the capital to apply; but, even if he had, he would not be willing to do so, for fear of increasing his rent.—(Rev. Mr Sorley, R. C. C.)—In this district the production is certainly confined to such as the personal exertions of the tenantry, unaided by skill or capital, can force from the land.

The chief capital a farmer in this country possesses, is his labour.—(Mr Rogers.)

The peasantry of Ireland are however not more destitute of the means, than they are of the desire to improve their lands. They have been taught by a long and painful experience, that with rents always in advance of their means, all they can produce they will be compelled to give as rent, and that whether their skill and industry be great or small, their share of the produce will be the same, that is, that they will be allowed to retain only a bare subsistence. They cannot have less, their landlords will not permit them to have more. All spirit of enterprise is completely crushed, and the very idea of improvement becomes hateful, for to improve is to ensure as a reward that they will be harrassed for additional payments. Here then the system of nominal rents becomes a mighty engine for repressing the energies of the country. A system for perpetuating beggary, by making increased production a curse to the producer. The course generally adopted with the peasantry, located on bog and mountain land, is a striking example of the endless lesson which is taught them upon the uselessness of skill and enterprise. After years of incessant toil and privation they mostly succeed in bringing their little plots into tolerable cultivation, when they fairly indulge in the expectation of a few additions to their wretched condition, as the reward of hard exertion, privations, and suffering. But vain is the hope; the rent is raised to meet the increased value which they have given to the land, and they must still be content with a bare subsistence, and not expect even a small share of what their own skill and industry has produced. There is no alternative, they must either pay the increased rent or quit the soil which their industry has converted from a worthless waste to a state of fertility, taking another portion of bog to undergo the same course of privations, and again to have the reward of their labour snatched from them. Their utmost skill and industry can bring them no reward—a bare subsistence is the doom of the Irish peasantry; the industrious man cannot have more, the idle cannot have less. The stimulant to good conduct, industry, and enterprise, is taken away. Apathy first, and then vice succeeds.

*Leitrim.* F. 39.—“They are afraid to reclaim bog during their idle time, lest they should be made to pay rent for it.”—(Mr Holtan.)—“What is the use of reclaiming land? I have known land that was not fit for snipe-walks to be turned into onion-gardens, and at the first opportunity the man that did it had his choice to turn out on the wide world, or pay a rack rent for leave to enjoy the work of his own hands.”—(Conboy.)

*Mayo.* F. 41.—“A good many tenants have been deterred from the reclamation of bog, through the conviction that the moment such lands, improved by their own industry exclusively, should fall out of lease, they would be charged the full value for them, without any allowance.”—(Rev. Mr M<sup>re</sup>Manus, R. C. C.)—The Rev. Mr Dwyer, P. P., mentions “the case of some

tenants, who, after having reclaimed at their own expense a considerable quantity of waste land, which they held under a short lease, near Louisburg, were obliged, at its expiration, to pay a double rent."

*Galway. A. 481.*—The poor manufacture this waste land for themselves, and then the landlords turn them out, add their farms to the estate, and put them into another part of the mountain. I have known them frequently to be told that no other terms would be given to them, unless they choose to pay the full rent for the land they had without any help reclaimed. So many undertake this, for they would sooner go under the rent than under the mountain to rack themselves again and again after the perishing they got before.—(Fox.)—A man named Dowd reclaimed a small portion of land on which he was a yearly tenant. When he began, the ground all round him was worth nothing; but he has now got into the middle of it. He has made many improvements, and put a wall round his garden; and if he does not pay the rent that they choose to fix, they will pitch him out upon the *station* they have showed him. He is now a great mote in their eyes, because their business is done. He will have greens for his dinner, but the landlords must have the advantage, and they are gathering the people like pigeons to get some of the crumbs for themselves.—(Fox.)—There is little or nothing over the rent for the holder. The meat and the marrow go to the landlord, and there is nothing left to us but the picking of the bones.—(Gerraghty.)

*Galway. A. 359.*—"It is useless to advise people, when others do not employ them, to employ themselves, and thereby improve their lands. The common reply to my suggestions to them on this head is, 'if we showed that we were getting better, so much would be immediately added to the rent.' They will not even help to mend the bye-roads that lead to their own dwellings; they say if they did, the agent would drive his gig up to their door and raise the rent."—(Dr Kirwan.)

To prove that the apathy of the peasantry is not the natural result of their character but is produced by nominal rents, it is only necessary to refer to their conduct when engaged as labourers to work by the piece, and when the reward, however small, is still in proportion to their exertions. They, their wives, and their children, commence work at the dawn of the day, and cease only at nightfall, and so intense are their exertions that severe illness is frequently the result.

It seems to be a very general impression that small farms cannot be as highly cultivated as large ones—the chief ground of this belief seems to be the wretched tillage of the small farms in Ireland, but sufficient reason has already been given for their condition.

The principal evil attributed to small farms is the supposed difficulty of introducing a perfect rotation of crops, but the estates managed by Mr Blacker, in Armagh, by Mr Rose, in Monaghan, and Mr Creighton, in Fermanagh, together with the small farms in many other parts of the country, have most successfully shown that the alternation system can be as beneficially conducted with stall feeding of cattle on a farm of 10 as on a farm of 100 acres.

The condition of the tenantry on the estates of these gentle-



men affords the best standard of the withering nature of the system generally prevailing—it proves that excessive rents may gradually destroy themselves, and those who pay them, while rents always proportionate to the means of the peasantry may be gradually increased, and yet admit of a constantly increasing prosperity in the tenantry. It is a very common error to suppose that it is knowledge merely that these gentlemen diffuse; they advance capital to their peasantry in the shape of seed, implements, and live stock, and take no more of the promised rents than the profits of the farm allow. Had they given but the instruction—had they omitted the loan of capital and the hope which their conduct created, their estates would have varied nothing from the general picture.

*Monaghan.*—Mr Rose gives his tenants lime and seeds of rape, turnips, clover, &c., and lends them cows and pigs on certain conditions, and for which they pay a moderate annual sum, thereby putting it in their power to adopt the most advantageous system of husbandry, and rise from their miserable and degraded situation to one of comparative comfort, enabling them to pay their rents, and of course to contribute towards the prosperity of the landlords and the country.

*Tyrkennedy. Fermanagh.*—Agriculture is much neglected by the generality of farmers and their landlords; many of the latter are also absentees. Yet there are two or three instances of gentlemen endeavouring to promote a better system, by the introduction of clover, tares, turnips, and rape. Mr Creighton, in a neighbouring barony, has engaged a Scotch agriculturist to instruct his tenants, which has had some good effect, even in this barony, and is likely to be productive of some extensive advantage. The people uniformly speak of Mr Creighton as a most excellent landlord, not only in teaching them to manage their farms to profit, but at the same time refusing to accept more than a fair rent. This humane treatment always ensures a corresponding good feeling on the part of the tenant, and a confidence in his landlord, which induces him to exert himself in improving his farm, the stimulus thus received by the Irish, and their gratitude consequent upon it, cannot be exceeded in any country.

They who hold above fifty acres of land are the tenants of those who are anxious to abolish small farms, and to encourage a wealthier class of tenantry upon their estates. These proprietors, by being particular in the choice of their tenants, create an exclusive class, and thus greatly limit the competition for their lands, which are let at rents which the tenants are able to pay, and yet to retain a fair return for their capital. The amount of capital which the tenants possess, however, would in England be deemed insufficient for the proper cultivation of their lands. They whose farms do not exceed 100 acres are mostly dairy farmers. They whose farms exceed that quantity are generally graziers. Neither the dairy farmers nor the graziers keep more than a few acres of their land in tillage. Their capital principally consists of stock which can

at a moment's notice be removed from the land. It would be imprudent in those who do not possess leases of their farms to improve the lands or the buildings upon them. They might quarrel with their landlords; their farms might pass to less prudent proprietors by sale or by death, when they might be dispossessed, or their rents might be raised, and in either case they would lose the advantage of the improvements which they had effected. The custom of Ireland with respect to improvements is different from that of England. In the latter allowance is made, on the outgoing of a tenant, for all his improvements. The temptation to raise rents is constantly pressing in a country like Ireland, in which the occupation of land extends to the whole of the peasantry; and in which the number of competitors is consequently so large; and more particularly in a country in which the possession of land is permitted to be of such vital importance to the peasantry, as to ensure the promise of any rent which might be asked. In England the occupiers of land might be termed a monopoly class. They are so few compared with the peasantry, that the latter do not enter into competition with them, as they would not be willing to take more land than sufficient for a garden, and certainly would not bid more for land than its fair value. Of this ample proof will be found in the Appendix A. to the Report of the Poor Law Inquiry for England and Wales. In England farms frequently remain untenanted for a length of time, because no one will take them at the terms which are demanded. In Ireland the whisper of a farm to let would bring a body of competitors willing to take it upon any terms. In some few cases leases are granted, and then the farmers of Ireland improve the property, and adopt a better system of tillage, as far as their limited capital and skill will permit them; but as they are mostly only the best of the small tenantry, retained upon the consolidation of a number of small farms, neither their capital nor their knowledge are very great. Many proprietors have endeavoured to entice Scotch and English farmers to settle upon their estates; but though they offered them farms at fair rents, and with good leases, they have rarely succeeded in their wishes. The nature and extent of agrarian crime has, in almost every instance, alarmed the Scotch and English, both as to the security of their lives and their properties, and thus the advantages which would arise from the example of the most wealthy and skilful agriculturists in the world are lost to Ireland. The temptation which the half-cultivated, but fertile lands and the cheap labour of Ireland, hold out to the British capitalist, are nullified by the excited and disturbed state in

which through *the dread of destitution*, the peasantry are constantly kept.

*Sligo.* F. 42.—“ I could,” said Mr Dodwell, “ mention several instances where individuals have been prevented investing capital in the united farms of several ejected tenants through fear of outrages. It has been attempted (but in vain) to introduce experienced farmers, men of money and information. Scotchmen have applied to me for large farms, and I have accepted their offers with pleasure, but, before taking possession, they have been frightened at the state of things, and have withdrawn; they had reason to think that they would not be safe.”

*King's County.* F. 48.—Mr Walker says, there is no doubt but people have been deterred from investing capital in farming and other occupations in this neighbourhood, from the fear of disturbances arising out of their taking land, and joining small farms. No large farmers, taking with them much capital, have withdrawn from the neighbourhood; but many small farmers have emigrated.

*Kerry.* F. 63.—“ We are perfectly satisfied that strangers will not bring capital to employ on farms in any part of the South of Ireland, from fear of the insecurity of their property. If this barony did not share in the general opinion entertained in England that Ireland is unsafe for person and property, there would be no reason for English capital and farmers keeping away from it.”—(Messrs Meredith, Sealy, Fitzgerald.)

For one who has made the attempt to settle in Ireland, thousands have abandoned the idea upon reading the accounts of that country which appear in the English newspapers. Persons who have been brought up in a country in which security for person and for property is all but perfect, could not be induced by any prospect of extra gain to settle in a country of which they know nothing but the reports of misery, poverty, and crime. The display of military, and military police, would be sufficient to alarm an English farmer if he visited Ireland—particularly if he had lived in a district in England in which a soldier would be looked upon as a curiosity, and had been unaccustomed to any other functionary than the parish constable, an office alternately held by himself and each of his neighbours.

Till I had been some time in Ireland, I had always considered the territorial revenue system of India, under which one-half of the gross produce of the land is taken as a tax, to be the most perfect system for repressing industry, and especially for preventing the application of capital to agriculture, which human ingenuity could devise; but I am now in doubt whether the nominal rent system of Ireland is not more effective to those ends.

The excessive desire of the peasantry for land, has been even more powerful in its effects upon trade and manufactures than upon agriculture. By perpetuating poverty, that desire has prevented domestic trade, and, by exciting to crime, it has prevented the establishment of manufactures.



Domestic trade can scarcely exist in a country like Ireland, in which the working classes are kept in abject poverty, in which there is scarcely any middling class, and in which there is no wealthy class excepting the proprietors of the land. Thus the agricultural villages which in England are to be found in every direction, and only three or four miles apart, do not exist in Ireland. Tea, sugar, bacon, blue, starch, candles, salt, pepper, mustard, and a variety of other articles which have become the necessities of life to an English labourer's family, are rarely indulged in even by a small farmer in Ireland—perhaps not more than twice or three times in a year. Great endeavours have been made by the legislature, from time to time, to encourage a greater consumption in Ireland of those articles which pay custom and excise duties in England, and with this view duties have been abolished upon some articles, and reduced upon others. But these attempts have been futile, as all future attempts will be, whilst the Irish peasant's contract is, *the cheapest food, and the smallest quantity of it which will sustain life.*

*Galway.* D. 93.—There are but few labourers that lay out anything at the grocer's shop; they never have tea, except at Christmas, and some of them do not know the taste of it; they do not drink milk for more than three months in the year; in short, they never have "kitchen," except in winter and spring, when they buy a few herrings.—(Mr Comyn).—In lieu of candles, rushes are used, after being dipped in melted butter; others make use of splinters of bog timber, but candles are rare with all.

*Leitrim.* D. 94.—A very small quantity of exciseable articles enters into the consumption of a labourer's family. On Christmas day and on Easter Sunday, after forty days' fast, he treats himself and his family to a couple of dozens of eggs and a cup of tea, and then returns to potatoes and milk; as for tobacco, I should say that  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  a day is as much as is spent by the majority of them.—(Rev. Mr McGuire, P. P.)

*Mayo.* D. 95.—Thomas Malley, a tenant of three acres, estimates his own outlay and that of others like him, at a  $1d.$  a-week for soap and a  $\frac{1}{2}d.$  a week for salt. He never buys candles except at Christmas; he makes use of splinters of bog-deal, like other people: he doesn't know any one in his village that drinks tea or uses sugar, except now and then, perhaps twice a-year.

*Dublin.* D. 96.—Few of them can ever reach to a herring, butter, dripping, or other seasoning: when in full work, and they can otherwise afford it, they will, for a family of average number, spend about  $1s.$  per week for buttermilk. To a question concerning the consumption of groceries by a labourer's family, the answer given by one of the labourers, and assented to by all, was, "As for that, we know nothing of it, except on Christmas day or Easter Sunday; and we are lucky if we get it then."

*Kilkenny.* D. 97.—"A majority of labourers use for kitchen only salt, and even that they endeavour to economize, by dissolving it in water, in which they dip their potatoes."—(Mr Coyne).—Labourers don't use groceries, except on festivals; "you may see a tea-pot on a cottier's dresser," observes Mr Scully, "but you may be sure that he does not make use of it more than twice a-year."

*King's Co.*— Riddle, a labourer, states that a labourer's family expends for soap and candles and "kitchen" about 6*d.* a week, and that labourers are too poor to purchase groceries.

*Meath.* D. 101.—To a question concerning groceries, as consumed by labourers and their families, the answer given was, "As for that, they know nothing of it at all." It appears that if, by chance, they taste any on Christmas or Easter day, they think themselves very lucky.

*Limerick.* D. 109.—The weekly expenditure of a labourer for soap, candles, tobacco, and what is termed "kitchen," is very trifling. We think the following a fair average per annum: for soap, 10*s.*; for candles, 4*s.*; for salt, 1*s.*; for milk, 10*s.* Tobacco cannot be calculated, as it depends on the habits and means of the labourer.—(Rev. Mr M'Mahon, P. P.)—Groceries are not consumed by a labourer's family, except a little at Christmas.

*Down.* D. 112.—Soap, at half a pound a-week, will be 8*s.* 8*d.* (4*d.* per lb.); tobacco  $\frac{1}{2}$ *d.* a day, 15*s.* 2*d.*; tea and sugar (taken only at Christmas and Easter) 2*s.* in the year; labourers who are Protestants or Presbyterians pay no dues. The Rev. Mr Boland, P. P., stated that a labourer's family paid him, upon an average, 3*s.* a-year.

By comparing the number of persons employed in domestic trade in an agricultural county in England, and in an agricultural county in Ireland having the same population, the effect of *nominal rents* will be sufficiently glaring. But such a mode of comparison will not show the actual difference. The general shop of an English village, and the general shop of the several districts of Ireland, are different things under the same term. The stock of a general shop in an English village will be worth from 2,000*l.* to 20,000*l.* The stock of a general shop in Ireland might be worth a few hundreds, at a very high estimate. The following statements will give some idea of the difference of the extent of domestic trade in an English and an Irish rural district.

*Report of Mr Okeden, late Chairman of Quarter Sessions of Dorsetshire, and Assistant Commissioner to the Poor Law Inquiry for England and Wales. App. A. 27.*

In the agricultural districts which I have investigated, (Dorset and Wilts), the following may be taken as a fair average calculation of the annual expenses of a man and his wife in the prime of life and strength:—

House rent, with good garden	-	-	-	£4	0	0
Fuel	-	-	-	3	0	0
Bread, two gallon loaves per week	-	-	-	6	18	0
Salt	-	-	-	0	4	4
Candles and soap	-	-	-	1	0	0
Bacon, 2lbs. per week each, at 4 <i>d.</i>	-	-	-	1	14	8
Tea, 7lbs. per annum, at 6 <i>s.</i>	-	-	-	2	2	0
Butter and cheese	-	-	-	2	10	0
Clothing of all kinds, shoes, &c.	-	-	-	6	0	0
Wear and tear of clothing, of bedding, furniture, &c.	-	-	-	2	16	0
Extras, viz. sugar, treacle, beer, &c.	-	-	-	2	17	0

£33 2 0

The foregoing statement is by no means exaggerated in amount. The returns made from every other agricultural district in England will give fully as large an expenditure by a labourer's family.

The following are statements of an Irish labourer's expenditure :—

	£.	s.	d.
<i>Leitrim.</i> D. 93.—Rent of an acre for potatoes . . .	4	0	0
Salt . . . . .	0	1	0
Herrings and other "kitchen" . . . . .	0	5	0
Skimmed milk, at three quarts for 1d. . . . .	0	10	0
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	4	16	0
Balance for contingencies . . . . .	0	12	0
	<hr/>		
	£5	8	0

	£.	s.	d.
<i>Waterford.</i> D. 111.—Herrings in winter . . . . .	0	5	0
Salt, per annum . . . . .	0	2	0
Soap, ditto . . . . .	0	7	0
Candles, ditto . . . . .	0	3	0
Tobacco, ditto . . . . .	1	10	0
	<hr/>		
	£2	7	0

A labourer spends nothing on groceries; he eats meat generally at Christmas and Easter, which may cost him about 3s. (This amount is in addition to the value of his potatoe ground.)

An English labourer expends for tea, sugar, treacle, and beer alone 5*l.*, which is about the value of the total earnings of an Irish labourer. To make an attempt to estimate the annual expenditure of an Irish peasant's family upon clothing would be idle. Whether the condition of the Irish peasantry is improved, is a problem which many are endeavouring to solve. I doubt the improvement, because existence could not be preserved with less than they now have.

It has been urged as the reason why manufactures are not more extensive in Ireland, that the people of that country cannot successfully compete with the English. The linen manufacture of the North of Ireland, which is unrivalled by Great Britain or by any other country, might perhaps be a sufficient answer. But in Dublin there is a very extensive establishment for printing cottons. The proprietor, Mr Henry, a native of Scotland, told me that he bought most of his cloths in Glasgow and Manchester, and that when printed they were returned to Glasgow or Manchester, or sent to London for sale. So that with the disadvantage of two freights, the cheap labour of Ireland enables him to compete with those who print their



cloths in the towns in which they are made. There is also in Dublin a cloth manufactory which was established about twenty years since, by its proprietor, Mr Willans, an English gentleman, who, I believe, has also an establishment at Leeds. I do not know whether I am right in stating that the cloths of this establishment are frequently sent to the English markets for sale, but I think Mr Willans informed me that such was the case. Upon one material point I can speak confidently. His wools are mostly German; they are landed at Hull, carried across England, and are reshipped at Liverpool. His cloths, therefore, when sent to the English market, have to contend under the disadvantage of the cost of double carriage, between England and Ireland; which, upon bulky goods, is considerable. The following is another instance, of lace made in Ireland, being sent for sale to the town in England, in which lace is principally manufactured.

*Meath.* D. 37.—With the exception of one establishment, there is no employment for children of either sex worth speaking of. The establishment alluded to is one in Kells, which furnishes employment to a considerable number of girls, and young women of the town and neighbourhood, and the example of which has caused the occupation to be followed by many other girls at home, and to be adopted in other districts, and even distant parts of Ireland. It is the lace manufactory, established some years ago in that town by Messrs Colston. *The lace is sent to Nottingham for sale*, and it is only the cheapness of labour that enables it to withstand English competition. There are altogether in Kells near 300 girls employed at that work, whose weekly earnings vary, according to their skill and industry, from 2s. to 4s. per week; some of the girls in the country employ themselves in this way, and pedlars go round to the cabins to buy the lace of them.

The limited extent of the manufactures in Ireland is entirely owing to the want of capital amongst the Irish, and to the opinion which the English and Scotch entertain of the insecurity of person and property in that country.

*Kilkenny.* F. 47.—The obvious consequences of these outrages would be to prevent capitalists from exposing themselves to danger by coming into the country. "I have met with manufacturers in the north of England who have declared to me that they would be delighted to avail themselves of the great water power, and of the cheap labour, of this country, and that nothing but the unsettled state of the country prevented their doing so."—(Mr Robbins, of Firgrove.) None of the witnesses are aware of these outrages having forced capital to be withdrawn from the neighbourhood.

*Queen's County.* F. 56.—One or two years ago it was stated that an English company intended to establish a cotton manufactory at Mountrath, but that the project was abandoned from want of confidence in the tranquillity of the country.—(Mr Wray.)—No persons have been of late years or at all in this barony, induced from the fear of disturbances to withdraw their capital and themselves from the neighbourhood.

*Tipperary.* F. 69.—The fear of disturbance has sometimes deterred persons from investing capital in the neighbourhood. The following instance is given:—An Englishman came to take a mill at Bakerstown, near Holycross;

he arrived at night at Thurles, and was so alarmed at the disturbance in the town, that he turned back the very next morning, without proceeding to look at the mills.

A native of Great Britain who possesses a manufactory in one of the principal towns in Ireland, told me that he had often been asked by English and Scotch manufacturers whether it would be safe for them to establish works in the rural districts of Ireland, and that he had felt compelled to dissuade them from the attempt. He felt that it would be dangerous to have dealings in the relation of capitalist and workman with a people who had by necessity been taught to make and execute laws in defiance of those made by the legislature.

It is superfluous to dwell upon the advantages which would result to Ireland, if the well-grounded fears of British capitalist manufacturers were removed. The establishments of manufactories in Ireland would quickly raise the value of the land. A town containing a few large manufactories with the variety of attendant trades, would pay in ground rents many times more than the same number of acres applied to agricultural purposes. But the increased value which would be given to the land, for many miles around such a town, is of yet greater importance: such a town would become a market for the produce of the surrounding country; for the produce of brickfields, coal pits, and of lime and stone quarries. It would create a demand for land upon which to erect villas for a class of wealthy tradesmen, and for the structure of canals and rail roads. To give a faithful idea of the effects of creating such towns, it would be necessary to give the history of the rise and progress of some of the many which have sprung up within the last twenty years, in the middle and northern counties of England, and in the south of Scotland.

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### *Recapitulation.*

We find, then, that if the peasantry have not land, they must beg, steal, or starve; that to obtain land they must engage to pay any rent which may be demanded; that to retain possession when arrears have accumulated, they are compelled to enter into a general combination, in defiance of the laws, and to commit atrocities of the most frightful description; that to endeavour to pay excessive, or "nominal rents," they are compelled to live on the cheapest food—the potatoe,—and

thus to subject themselves to annual famine, to disease, and to the committal of theft; that, being unable to provide against the contingencies to which they and their families are by nature liable, in the event of their death their widows and children become wandering beggars, contract idle and dissolute habits, and spread disease and immorality through the country, and cost more to society than those who are living by industry; that being unable during health and vigour to provide against destitution in old age, and disliking to become vagrants, they contract early and reckless marriages, in the hope that they may have children to protect them when they are unable to work, and thus they greatly increase the population; that being unable to retain or accumulate capital, they cultivate their lands under great disadvantage, by which the produce is limited in quantity, and of inferior quality, the landlord injured by the diminution of his rents, and the labourer by the diminution of the fund for employment; that, being kept at the lowest state of existence, they cannot become purchasers, and thus trade is materially repressed; that, being driven to crime to retain their lands and their employment, they deter persons of capital from establishing manufactures in the country.



## REMEDY FOR THE EVILS OF IRELAND.

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THE anxiety of the peasantry to hold land is, then, in some cases the immediate cause, and, as creating nominal rents, in others the indirect cause of the evils of Ireland. It is most important to bear in mind, when considering what remedies can be applied, that this anxiety *does not arise from the discontent of the peasantry with their present condition*, and a desire to better it,—that it does not arise from “poverty,” in the strict sense of that word. Inadequate as the subsistence fund is for their comfort, it does support the whole population; the proof of which is, that death by starvation rarely occurs in Ireland. *Scarcely, without exception, the able-bodied have sufficient employment to give them the ordinary, though miserable, subsistence of the country.* This must be the case, as they do exist, rarely beg, and do not steal. The small tenantry have their farms, the cottiers have permanent engagements, and the casual labourers have full employment during six months of the year; during other three months they are employed three or four days in each week, and during two other months about two days in the week. Making allowance for lost days, the casual labourers are perhaps out of employment three months of the year. But they are not unemployed three months, or even one month at a time. Nor are one-fourth of the labourers constantly out of employment. To understand this it is only necessary to consider the manner in which they are now hired. On a day favourable to agricultural operations the whole of them are employed; on an unfavourable day they are all unemployed. Frequently an employer changes his labourers to give an equal share of his work to a larger number of the men of his neighbourhood. He takes one set for three or four days, and then another set till his work is complete.—(See able-bodied out of work, App. A., and earnings of labourers, App. D. to Irish Poor Report.) That the peasantry of Ireland could do much more work than at present there can be no doubt, particularly if they were better fed. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that the agricultural labourers or the workmen in any trade in England, are all employed during the whole year, if six days of employment be reckoned as a week.

Were the evils of Ireland derived from the smallness of the labourers' subsistence fund, it would be far more diffi-

cult, if not impossible, to find a remedy. There are but two ways in which that fund can be increased; viz. by subtracting from some other fund, which in Ireland could only be rent, as there is no other; or by introducing capital from some other country with a view to increasing employment and production. From rent it could not be taken, as most of the landowners would be ruined by the subtraction of even a small portion of their present receipts. The only mode, therefore, would be to subtract capital from Great Britain, and this, to the great amount required, to effect wages by increasing employment, the people of Great Britain would not permit.

*The great anxiety of the peasantry for land arises from the dread of prospective destitution.*

The evils of Ireland, therefore, arise from the peculiar circumstances under which the peasantry are compelled to receive their subsistence, viz., from being compelled to rent land at any price which may be asked, to beg, to steal, or to starve. The evils originate in a *feeling of insecurity* in the minds of the peasantry as to the continuation of their present subsistence—in mere fear for the future.

If the peasantry could feel secure of a subsistence, equal to that which they at present possess, they would cease to commit crime and to bid excessive rents, and thus the obstacles to their future self-improvement would be removed, and each succeeding day would witness an increase in production and in comfort.

The remedy for these evils consists in the creation in the minds of the peasantry, of *the feeling that they cannot starve, or be driven to beg or steal*. In order to create such a feeling, it is not necessary to increase in the slightest degree the fund now appropriated to their subsistence.

To produce the desired feeling of security, society must ensure to every man destitute of the means of providing it for himself, a provision at the public expense equal to the present subsistence of the peasantry. The Legislature must confer upon every man the right to demand the provision. It must confer the right; for if it is in any one's power to refuse the provision, the feeling of security will not be created. By its administration it must provide against persons embracing it in preference to working for a subsistence, and it must provide against those who hold land, or have employment, obtaining it. The only mode of giving the security to every man, without the danger of creating idleness, and without extending the provision to those who have other means, is by administering it in asylums.

In order to create the feeling of security, it is not neces-

sary that many should enter the establishments. It is only necessary that every man should feel that he has a legal right to the shelter and food which they afford.

It has often been stated that the Irish peasantry will not willingly enter an asylum. That they will not enter it if they can live nearly as well by industry I am certain; but I am also certain that they will greatly prefer entering an asylum to resorting to mendicancy.

Before reading the evidence obtained by the Irish Poor Commission upon this point, it is necessary to consider the circumstances under which it was collected. The statements are in reply to a question as to whether *vagrants* would be willing to enter a House of Industry. In the first place, the inclination of those who had been forced to surmount the feeling of repugnance generally entertained by the Irish peasantry to vagrancy, is not a guide to the feelings of those who have escaped degradation. It appears by the evidence, that the beggars will generally have great repugnance to enter a house of industry, but that those of the peasantry who have never begged will greatly prefer entering such an asylum to vagrancy. It may easily be imagined that the man who for the first time is driven by misfortune to live upon charity will greatly prefer the shelter of an asylum to wandering from door to door, proclaiming what he considers his shame to fresh faces every day. In the next place the people of Ireland have no asylums corresponding to such as I propose. Mendicity Institutions and Houses of Industry are the only places of which they have any idea, and as these institutions only exist in a few large towns, the peasantry know nothing of them but by report, and that report is much against them. The generality of these institutions are a species of vagrant prison-places in which persons found begging in towns are sometimes confined; in fact, a species of Bridewell. The food which is given in them is generally insufficient to allay hunger. The food in the Mendicity Institution in the city of Londonderry is only sufficient for children of 10 or 12 years of age. The managing director of the Mendicity Institution in another of the principal cities in Ireland told me, that the food given in it was never sufficient to satisfy the appetites of the inmates, and that they mostly remained hungry after each meal.

*Mayo.* A. 496.—M'Nally says, "I think the generality of beggars would prefer entering a house of industry to wandering about half naked in the cold and rains of winter; but there are some who, having no charge (children to provide for) that they can easily get enough of food outside, and would prefer remaining out." John Foster, an old beggarman, says, "I would



rather have the free range outside, and supple my joints by a walk through the country."

The labourers, both those under examination and several others present, declare that there are many occasions of want of employment on which they would gladly avail themselves of a house of industry, by entering it with their families; they would even be willing to submit to the necessary separation of the different sexes of the family; but would not go in if they could get four-pence a day outside.

A. 499.—The beggars say they would gladly enter a house of industry; that though compelled to work hard and live on coarse food, they would live much more easy and comfortable than they do at present.

A. 503.—A question being asked, whether, if there were a house of industry in the parish, the farmers would still continue to encourage vagrancy by affording relief? James Jennings, a small farmer, being present, says, "If there were such a house in every village, I would relieve the beggar still, and think it a sin to refuse him." Hynes turned to him, and said, "If you would relieve him, a hundred would refer him to that house; you could not support them all yourself, and they would soon find begging a bad business." All the other witnesses seemed to agree with Hynes, that in such a case begging would soon cease for want of encouragement.

A. 506.—All the witnesses believe the beggars of this parish would gladly enter a house of industry though it involved a temporary restriction on their personal liberty, provided they were allowed tobacco; they would rather be restricted in their food than deprived of it, and would gladly forego a meal to procure it.

*Roscommon.* A. 514.—There is no house of industry in the parish; as to the feeling about going into a house of industry, the following are the views of the witnesses:—"I would rather work all the year through, up to my hips in water, than go in."—(Kelly.)—"I think there would be a strong reluctance to a separation of families or confinement, but I think some would avoid privation by accepting a public provision."—(O'Connor Don.)—In reply to the question, would the personal confinement or separation of families be an objection?—"The privation of freedom, or the separation of husband and wife, or mother and child, would be a material objection, but I should say, not an insuperable one."—(O'Connor Don.)—"Quite insuperable," said a respectable man who was standing near; "if I was distressed, and had no food for my wife and children, I would take the provision, supposing they were as well provided for as myself, but I would not like to be divorced."—(Gaffney.)—"I think, if a provision were made, many would refuse alms, and thereby contribute to obviate the necessity of enforcing the vagrancy laws."—(Dr Blundell.)—"Whatever objections the conditions annexed to the provision might occasion, in a short time, when they became satisfied that the institution was properly managed, their reluctance to enter would give way before the pressure of want and wretchedness that bear on them; there would be much less reluctance to it if the female children were left with their mothers."—(Mr M'Dermott.)

A. 518.—Touching a house of industry, Coniton said, "If I were asked now, I for one would go into it, if I was sure my family would be as well taken care of as myself; and I know that the most of us would rather starve than beg; would take your provision and be glad to get it; but I am not sure that a man would do much good when he came out of it, or that many would come out at all; and if I had work every day in the year that would give me my cabin over my head, and enough of potatoes and milk, and good coarse clothes for myself and my little ones, I would not go into such a house for roast meat all the year round." And Kenny said, "I

would take it, though I would think it hard to be divorced from my wife and children; but the whole country will go in if you give them leave, as things go now. I agree with Coniton, that once in, a man is in for life, for he would lose his land; and when he came out he would have nothing; for my part, I'll be glad to get it."

*Sligo.* A. 528.—John Robinson, weaver, says, "A great many would go into a house of industry if it was established; every man willing to work would readily go in if their liberty was not too much restricted. I myself would readily go in."

528.—There is no house of industry or mendicity nearer than the town of Sligo. Some of those who beg would be willing to go into such a house, if established in the parish, but the great majority would be most unwilling to do so, so much so that Mr Cogan said, "You would have the house full of beggars here to-day, but that a report was spread that they would be all put into a house, and kept from roving about the country;" and John Davy said, "When I was coming into town just now, I met many of them running away, lest they should be taken up."

A. 530.—There is one house of industry at Sligo, but it is not large enough for even half the town beggars.

Mr P. Fenny, farmer, says, "The beggars would be willing enough to go into a house of industry; if you feed them well you will soon have large barracks."

A. 532.—The repugnance to an institution for the relief of the destitute would be removed if the funds for its support came in no way from the people themselves, but they dread such an institution very much, lest, whatever the law may be, the tax for it would in some way be put by the landlords on the land. There is no house of industry or mendicity nearer than Sligo; if there was one in the parish, a great many of even the landholders would go in at some seasons of the year, and great numbers would send their families in during the scarce time of summer.

*Carlow.* A. 540.—There is no house of industry in the parish, nor even if there were would more than one-third be willing to go into it; many refused when a mendicity existed here before. Some beggars were seen, the day it was opened, going away from the town to Naas.

A. 543.—The general feeling is against repressing vagrancy, by severity of any description, but this repugnance would be entirely removed if there was any regular provision made for the poor.

There is no house of industry in the parish, and even if there was the beggars would not like to go in, unless their food and lodging were better than those of the labourer, both at present being equally as good; independent of which, however, they would refuse to give up their liberty.

*Kildare. Par. Kilcock.* 555.—There is no house of industry in the parish, nor would the beggars be willing to go into one; because, as Mr Hughes says, "they get more meat and drink, more tea than the labourers, and in every way live better, such is the miserable condition of that class."

On the labourers being asked, would they go in, Thomas M'Dermott said, "I would not go to be separated from my wife and children; I would rather have our own mess, supposing it to be a bad one, than go in to eat a better one."

*Par. Naas.* 558.—It was supposed, if there were one, that the majority of beggars would take refuge in it; but Andrew Neal (a labourer, 85 years of age, who supports himself by a horse and car) being asked if he would be willing to enter a house of industry, replied, "if a man could get work out of it he would sooner die than go in, because I would have my liberty, and could

dispose of my earnings in any way I liked, and divide them with any relation or friend I had a liking for.

*Longford. Par. Abbeyskrule.*—Rourke says, “there are some labourers who would be glad to have such a place in a season of distress; but there are others who would rather starve than expose themselves by going into such a place. If you kept them for life they might go in, but they would be ashamed to show their faces after coming out of it.” John Casey, a cottier, says, “for my children’s sake I would not go in; it would be a reproach to them for ever that their father had been in the pauper house; even in a season of distress I would rather struggle round than go in, and I believe that is the feeling of others as well as mine; the stranger would go in in this country, and if I was in a strange place, where I had no relative that it would scandalize, want might drive me in myself.” Michael Cox, a day labourer, whom the witnesses concur in describing as the poorest and most destitute man of his class in the parish, happening to be present, says, “I would never go in, it would be flung in my children’s face ever after. Many a day this summer I lived on half a meal of potatoes, and was often glad to have boiled cabbage and salt without a potatoe at all; I would not have gone even then.” On the day after the conversation in which the preceding sentiments had been publicly delivered, Michael Rourke came to the Assistant Commissioners and said, “the labourers are beginning to be afraid that they said too much against the poor-house yesterday, they do not think it as bad now as they thought it then; *but ’tis one thing a man will say in a crowd, when his pride is up, and another when he returns and sees the poverty at home.*”

*Par. Templehurshall.* 575.—The old and infirm would be glad of a place of refuge where the food and lodging would be equal to that of the labouring population, but the great body of the mendicants would prefer their present condition as affording greater personal liberty.

*Westmeath. Par. Bullincarrig.* 579.—There would be the greatest reluctance to enter it. The poor would prefer any sufferings to a restriction on their liberty.

*Par. Benowen.* 582.—Philip Lennon said, “I think, after two or three months in the scarce season of the year, a great number would be glad to have such a place to go to.”

Michael Fenny, beggar, says, “I would be very proud to have such a place to go to, and to spend all my life in it; I am tired of wandering, and am growing weak and old.”

*Par. Killucan.*—If an institution was established to give in-door support, the general opinion was, that the old and infirm would willingly go into it; but no other class.

*Town of Mout.* 589.—Beggars would not like to go into them if there were such institutions.

Patrick Mullvanny, labourer, says, “I would take all the chances I told told you of, viz. starvation, and, if I died under it, of having my wife and children beggars, rather than go into such a house.”

*Town of Mullingar.*—With regard to the effect a house of industry would have in suppressing vagrancy, it is said they would be very reluctant to go in, but many of them would for a few months in the scarce season. They would prefer 3d. a day outside. James Dogherty said, “I would rather fast half the day than be confined.”

Robert Walsh, cotton-weaver, said, “I wish to God it was open to us now, I would readily go in. I could bear confinement very well, as my trade is an in-door one.”

*Wexford. Par. Horetown.* 594.—Beggars have been known to refuse to



enter a house of industry, and those who were in have been desirous of leaving, and have done so for the purpose of begging.

*Par. Kilcormack.* 597.—Captain Owen says, that the people being easily satisfied as to food, clothing, and other necessities, would be unwilling to go into houses of industry, not from any indisposition on their part to work, but that in their mind the separation of families, or deprivation of freedom, would more than counterbalance the personal comforts enjoyed in such asylums.

*Par. Monart.* 601.—There is no house of industry nearer than Wexford, nor in the opinion of witnesses would those who beg be willing under any circumstances to go into such institutions.

*Par. Old Ross.* 603.—The industriously inclined would, in some cases, accept it; but there would be the greatest reluctance, among the better class of the poor, to accept such a mode of relief; and if it were to be purchased with the loss of individual liberty, or separation of families, they would not accept it at all. Mr Harman says, “that the separation of families and the obligation to work would form the most unpopular conditions of a provision.”

*Clare, Par. Abbey.* 611.—Some of the mendicants, who are old and infirm, express no reluctance to enter into a mendicity asylum; but middle-aged vagrants to whom the question was put, invariably declared their unwillingness, on any account, to part with the power of roaming about freely on all occasions.

*Par. Kildysart.* 617.—There was the most decided unwillingness expressed by the beggars to become inmates of a house, where the food and lodging should be equal to what they usually get. They are all impressed with the idea that severe and harsh measures enter into their ordinary discipline. The Assistant Commissioners represented to many that they would be provided with an abundance of what is now their ordinary food, and that they would have a warm house and a fire to stay by, instead of wandering about as at present. However, as a mendicant is never without enough to eat, they could not find that the additional comforts held out as inducements were sufficient to tempt them to consent to the loss of their liberty. This reluctance has been in some respects produced by the exertions of a dissolute woman who, having been once in the Limerick workhouse, seizes every opportunity of inveighing against the treatment she received there. She had been turned out of it for misconduct.

*Par. Killybegh.* 628.—Several beggars were examined as to whether they would go into a house of industry, and they all expressed the greatest horror at the idea, as they said, of being deprived of their liberty. One or two of them said, “they knew well what it was; they had heard their friends screeching and calling out for help when they were to go to the Mendicity at Limerick; and would such places be recommended to them?” One of them said, he knew he would never hear mass there; in fact, there was no excuse left untouched, and all the cruelties which report has assigned to the management of mendicities were pictured to their minds in the most exaggerated horrors.

Among all the different beggars who were asked, would they go into a house of industry, there was a manifest reluctance to enter, and all have assigned very characteristic reasons.

Pat Doolan, a poor decrepit old man, whose appearance manifested extreme destitution, said, “than his time here was but short, and that he would rather die among the neighbours.”

When pressed for a further reason, he said, “he feared he would never get mass.” But there will be a chaplain, “Still I do not like it.”

*Par. Killaloe.* 633.—The Widow Slattery at first expressed her willing-

ness to enter, but when told it would be necessary to separate her from her children, she answered, "she would rather die than part with them."

Judy Moynahan, a sturdy beggar-woman, who sometimes works, but more frequently begs, and who is much better off than those just mentioned, says, "that she would go in, if she saw others going."

John Hare, a travelling beggar, remarked, "that a poorhouse would be much more convenient for his equals than to be travelling about in the wet and cold."

*Par. Kilmanaheen.* 639.—There always appeared to be the greatest reluctance to enter any institution at all where they would be deprived of their personal liberty; but though the great body of the mendicants prefer their present condition, yet individuals were frequently met, who, from old age and accident, were so incapacitated, that they readily assured them no greater boon could be conferred on them, than the establishment of some institution for their reception and relief.

*Cork, Par. Innishannon.* 651.—"Would those who beg go into a house of industry, where of course men and women, children and grown persons, would be separated?"—"Old people that had no friends nor any one belonging to them, would go in, but people that had families would not; a poor woman is as fond of her child as if she had 1,000*l.* a year to give it."—(Messrs. McCarthy, Field, and Leary.)

*Par. Kilbrogan.* 654.—If there was a house of industry here, it would probably be the means of causing a good many who come from distant parts begging, to turn themselves to some kind of industry at home. Very few of the beggars would like to go into a house of industry, and if there were such a place for them to go into, it is most probable that the shopkeepers would not continue to give them charity.

The poor weavers say, "they think it would be very good to have a house of industry to go to for those who have no families; but where a man has a family, they think it better to do with half enough, than to be separated from it."

*Town of Clonakilty.* 657.—"It would be very difficult to induce them to go in at first, as there exists a great reluctance to go into any place of the kind, but this antipathy would gradually wear off."—(Mr Deasy, Rev. Mr Walsh, Dr Folliott, and others.)

*Par. Killeagh.* 658.—The nature of a house of industry having been explained, Anglum said, "I would rather beg about the country than go in there." Butler said at first, "I would sooner put two boys on my back, and get a potatoe at every house;" he afterwards said, "In July, if I was in distress, I would go in there, if I would be let out every Sunday; because then I might go away whenever I did not like it." The greatest objection would be the separation of families.

*Par. Liscarrol.* 660.—The labourers agree, that if it were allowed to go in during the months of June, July, and August, and to come out when the potatoes were ripe, great numbers would be glad to have the opportunity.

*Par. Macroom.* 663.—Being asked whether this would be the case if the rule of the house required that men should be separated from their families, the witnesses (labourers) paused, and then agreed that they would not go in except under the pressure of extreme necessity. Collins said, "If a man was reduced to the last pitch, and could do nothing else, of course he would go in; but I am full sure he would rather have one-third of the victuals, and stay out. Let a man be ever so poor, he would like to see his children morning and evening."

*Cork, Par. Ross Carbery.* 666.—Thomas Fitzgerald, a labourer out of em-

ployment, at first said, when spoken to on this subject, that he and his family would be very glad to go into a house of industry; but when it was explained to him that he must not expect to be permitted to enjoy without restriction the society of his wife and children, he exclaimed, "I would not go in if I were to be separated from my wife and children; no man that has feelings would do it."

*Par. Skull.* 670.—Beggars would have great objection to go into a house of industry, but it is thought that they would be compelled by the pressure of hunger. *The labourers would not think it so great a disgrace to go in there as to beg*, but separation of families and confinement are such evils that they would prefer almost any sort of subsistence outside.

*City of Cork.* 672.—There was great reluctance formerly to go into the city house of industry, now there is less; they are better treated than formerly, still the reluctance is very great; they prefer the freedom of begging. The reasons for their reluctance are, that they do not like the confinement, nor the diet; outside they get occasionally bits of meat. The women are very fond of tea; they sometimes remain till the middle of the day without food, for the purpose of collecting a few halfpence for tea. In the house of industry they get but potatoes and porridge.

*Par. Templetrine.* 676.—Mr Sealy says, "If you take into the house of industry a labourer's wife and children when he is going to England for work, and let them out to him when he comes back, he will be very well pleased, and you will find many of them willing enough to go in. As to able-bodied labourers, if when they were in they would be obliged to remain in for a year, the system would not work. Although there is a much greater number of labourers in summer than we can find employment for, it often happens that at harvest we cannot get as many as we want." John M'Kennedy, labourer, says, "he thinks they ought to go in, though it would be hard with some of them to part from their wives and children;" but, he added, "I would go into it myself to-morrow if it was near." And Crowley said, "Some would go into it, to be sure, but I would suffer a great deal before I would go, and be separated from my wife and children; it would be sweeter to have one meal of potatoes together, just as much as would keep the life in us, than to part and have what we liked."

*Par. Tracton.* 676.—If there was one properly managed, the poor people would be glad and delighted to go into it; they would have a clean place to live in; they would have a bed and regular meals, and certainly would be ten times better off than at present.

*Tipperary, Par. Roscrea.* 699.—When it was first opened, there were not more than a dozen persons sought to be admitted; but as soon as it was discovered how comfortable were the interior arrangements of the place, the number increased rapidly.

*Town of Clonmel.* 702.—Those who adopt mendicancy as a mode of living would not go into the Mendicity. The people object to being confined to the institution; *when they could get work, they would go out. At first they disliked hospitals, but now they enter them.* Beggars dislike the Mendicity on account of the fare, which is stir-about twice a day.

*Antrim, Par. Antrim.* 705.—It was proposed to have a house of industry established in this town, in which the lodging and food would be equal to that commonly possessed by the labouring classes, but the poor showed a reluctance to go in, if established, and consequently the design was abandoned.

*Par. Ballymoney.* 707.—*The most deserving objects of charity would be glad to go into a house of industry*, in which the food and lodging would be only equal to that usually possessed by the labouring class; it is doubted, however,



whether the offer would prove generally acceptable to the majority of paupers.

*Par. Billy.* 709.—If there were such, well managed, eventually the really deserving would have recourse to them.

*Town of Carrickfergus.* 711.—*The home beggars who are deserving objects would accept of relief in a house of industry*, where the food and lodging would be only equal to that commonly possessed by the working classes; but the strange beggars would refuse it.

*Randalstown.* 713.—Many would be glad to go into a house of industry where the food and lodging would be only equal to that commonly possessed by the labouring classes.

*Par. Layde.* 722.—Those who have no children would gladly go into a house of industry where the food and lodging would be only equal to that possessed by the labouring classes; but those who have children would in some cases be kept out by a feeling of pride on the part of their children, and in other cases through a desire to enjoy their society.

*Antrim, Par. Lisburn.* 725.—The poor who are destitute are anxious for lodging in the poorhouses of the charitable society; but we do not find that those who can live elsewhere are anxious to enter it; however, no beggars have been known to refuse to enter the house of industry, or when in have been anxious to leave it.

*Par. Resharhin.* 728.—It seems to be feared that, if there was a house of industry, too many would go into it; but all think that the able-bodied strangers would require force to compel them to cease begging.

*Town of Glenarm.* 730.—The home beggars, if they had an opportunity, would go into a house of industry where the food and lodging would be only equal to that usually possessed by the labouring classes.

*Donegal. Town of Dunfanaghy.* 733.—The beggars appear to dislike most particularly going into institutions of this kind, and prefer the wandering life. *It was thought some of the labourers (when out of employment) would go into them, and some would not.*

*Par. Connell.* 738.—It is believed that the greatest objection to avail of them would be experienced. The Right Rev. Dr M'Gittigan, Roman Catholic bishop, says, "Half the number of beggars have not appeared at my door this morning, though this is the helping day, in consequence of its being reported that there are gentlemen in town who are to put them into a poorhouse."

*Town of Donegal.* 742.—M'Diarmid, the labourer, observed, "I am quite sure that there are a great many who would not go into a workhouse at all, who are now going about."

*Town of Buncrana.* 745.—The infirm and aged might avail themselves of such an institution did it exist; they are fond, however, of their liberty, and a disinclination to enter such a place would operate with many.

*Town of Ballyshannon.* 751.—Mr Irwin, clerk to the Mendicity of Ballyshannon, observed, that it was thought that the greatest objection existed against such places generally. The mendicants love their liberty, and even superior living would not induce them to avail themselves of such relief, if they were not still permitted to wander about.

*Par. Moville.* 756.—It was the opinion of the Rev. Mr M'Leer, that the destitute, the aged, and infirm, would avail themselves of such resources; *and the disposition of the people to refuse aid to wandering mendicants would, under such circumstances, be so much diminished as probably to extinguish mendicancy.*

*Town of Stranellan.* 759.—The poor would not be willing to avail themselves of such relief; they like their liberty very much, and all who could otherwise maintain themselves would generally prefer doing so, and would

probably use a greater exertion for the purpose than they do at present to avoid mendicancy; but it is supposed that the very destitute poor, who really find difficulty in moving about, would be glad to avail themselves of it.

*Londonderry, Par. Coleraine.* 764.—It is thought that deserving objects only would be willing of their own accord to enter a poorhouse, where the food and lodging was equal to that of the labouring classes, *but it would require compulsion to make the lazy and drunken enter a poorhouse.* Some beggars have refused to go into, and some have left the poorhouse in Coleraine.

*Par. Upper Cumber.* 767.—The poor would rather have insufficient comfort and their liberty, than be confined in an institution. They dislike entering Derry, because of the Mendicity established in that city.

*Newtown Limavaddy.* 770.—None of the undeserving, and very few even of the deserving, would enter an institution, though the food, &c., might be equal to that of the labouring classes. O'Neill said "they would lie at the back of a ditch first."

*Par. Dungiven.* 774.—Beggars would be very unwilling to enter any such institution, at least if any work was required from them.

*Town of Maghera.* 784.—Public opinion would induce all to have recourse to it, and many would now willingly accept of such a shelter.

*City of Londonderry.* 793.—There is a Mendicity. Mr Anderson said, "*the allowance was not sufficient for any but a boy ten or twelve years old.*" "I never applied," said Brown, "to the Mendicity here; the allowance is too little. Many would wish to get in who could not, and who are obliged to beg in the country, but at least half of those might refuse to go in. The confinement and not getting enough to eat are the chief objections" Mr Anderson thought that the regular hours and the cleanliness insisted on (the punishment for dirt being low diet), induced many to dislike entering the institution; but of twenty who were receiving exterior relief, and who were offered a residence in the institution, only five accepted the offer, though the recusants were struck off the list. "I would rather live on half elsewhere than enter it; they would make me work and sweep the streets, and I am not able for it; besides, I would not like to be shut up," said Brown. "There is a great objection," said Mr A—, "to be employed sweeping the streets; it is considered a degradation. Many leave the institution discontented with it. They principally dislike the regularity and cleanliness enforced."

The effect of establishing houses of refuge generally throughout Ireland would be a very rapid diminution of agrarian crimes.

To conceive the effect, it is necessary to compare the condition of the ejected tenant now, and his condition with such an asylum ready to receive him. At present he knows not whither to turn—to the north, the south, the east, or the west. He is without the means to purchase food and shelter for his wife and helpless family, and as he has no immediate prospect of obtaining employment or another farm, they must wander about the country in cold and in misery, begging food and shelter. Would he not be more than human if he could witness the misery resulting in the sickness, and perhaps in the death, of those he loves, and not be urged by exasperation to crimes of violence? But his feelings would be very different if

he knew that, within a few miles of him, in the immediate neighbourhood of his friends and neighbours, there was a good house ready for the reception of his family, in which they could obtain food and clothing equal to what they had always been accustomed, and in which they may remain till he can procure employment or obtain another holding: that he need not seek admission into the asylum as a degraded man, but may demand it as his right: that it is a refuge intended for the unfortunate, and that every one who cannot obtain equal food, clothing, and shelter, to that which is provided in it, is considered unfortunate; and that the restrictions to which he and his family will be subjected, are only such as are necessary to prevent the idle and the dissolute from preferring the provision it affords to a life of industry.

Three months rarely pass without two or three families in each district being ejected from their holdings. One or two of them entering the establishments, and reporting upon their comfort and the kindness of the treatment in them, would be sufficient to give a feeling of security to the Peasantry, that their situation will not be much more painful than at present, if they are dispossessed of their land. When this feeling has been generated, the peasantry will no longer deem ejection from land deserving of the cruelties which they now inflict upon those who cause their ejection.

But, supposing that the peasantry could not be appeased by a provision in a house of refuge only equal to that which they are now allowed to retain out of the produce of their lands, it will only be necessary to relax the rules of the house, and to improve the diet till it becomes a matter of indifference to them whether they accept the public provision or retain their lands, but certainly until the preference for holding land shall be incapable of exciting them to acts of violence. In order to produce this state of mind in the peasantry, it is not necessary for any of them to enter the house of refuge, but only for all to be careless whether they enter it or retain their lands.

It is this state of indifference which it is requisite to produce in order to suppress agrarian crime. The peasant should only be allowed to feel that if he has a preference, he would rather keep his land, but his feeling in favour of keeping the land should not be much stronger. If crime occurs, it is a proof that the system adopted in the house of refuge is too rigid. If a large number enter the house it is evident that the system is too lax. The controul which the workhouse system affords is both perfect and simple. In the degree that you relax the rules and increase the internal comforts, you



entice the working classes, and in the degree that you make the rules strict and lessen the internal comforts, you repel them.

The similarity in the state of society in the rural districts of England, immediately preceding the passing of the 43rd of Elizabeth, to the state of society in the rural districts in Ireland at the present time, is very remarkable.

The peasantry of England at that period appear to have possessed the same extreme desire to obtain land, and, consequently, the same willingness to submit to exorbitant rents which now characterize the Irish peasantry. The practice of ejecting the peasantry from their dwellings, of destroying them and joining the small tillage farms, and laying them down in grass, seems then to have been as common in England as it is now in Ireland. The great profits arising from rearing sheep was in England the apparent inducement, as the great profit arising from grazing cattle appears to be in Ireland at the present time.

So extensive was the distress which had been produced in England by these means in the commencement of the sixteenth century, as to cause the act of 25th of Henry VIII, cap. 13, which having set forth the circumstances, proceeds to say that they have—

“Pulled down churches and towns, and enhanced the old rates of rents, or else brought them to such excessive fines, that no poor man is able to meddle with them. One of the greatest occasions why those greedy and covetous people do keep such great quantities of land in their hands, from the occupying of the poor husbandman, and do use it in pasture and not in tillage, is only the great profit that cometh of sheep, now got into few persons hands, in respect of the whole number of the King’s subjects, that some have 24,000, some 20,000, some 10,000 to 50,000 sheep.”

The conclusion of the act forbad any person to hold more than two farms, or to possess more than 2,500 sheep. The remedy, however, seems to have failed to produce the intended effect, as about twenty years later, in 1549, the junction of arable farms in England for the purpose of forming them into sheep-walks, appears to have proceeded to such an extent as to have alarmed the peasantry, and to have excited them to insurrection in several counties.

The following very interesting account is taken from Macpherson’s “Annals of Commerce,” vol. i, p. 104 :—

“The humours of enclosing the lands of England for pasture, instead of arable, had made the common people, at different times, very uneasy, insomuch that they had now begun violently to lay them open by insurrections in many counties, without having patience for their being laid open by a proclamation from the King already issued, because the proprietors were not so quick in

obeying it as the mob expected. And of all others that in Norfolk in this year was the most remarkable and furious, headed by Ket, a tanner in Windham, and Flowerdew, who, by firing beacons and ringing bells, drew many thousands of the lower people of Norfolk and Suffolk to join them, and committed many grievous and shocking outrages. They did infinite damage and mischief to the city of Norwich, which they almost laid desolate, by either driving industrious and wealthy inhabitants out of it, or else miserably butchering them. This insurrection occasioned the slaughter of about 5,000 of the rioters, Ket, their leader, being hanged on the top of Norwich Castle.

"There had been many enclosures lately made out of waste, marshy, and other kinds of barren and common grounds, whereby great improvements were effected. But as the poorer sort were thereby deprived of the benefit of such grounds for feeding their cattle and for fuel, it is not much to be wondered at that great clamours were thereby raised, which at length burst out into open riots, first in Kent, and afterwards in the counties of Essex, Buckingham, Northampton, Somerset, Lincoln, Norfolk, and Suffolk."

When reading the foregoing statements it is difficult to prevent the impression that they refer to the outrages committed a few years since by the Terry Alts in the county Clare. The nature of the outrages, and the causes of them, are so very similar.

The preambles to the acts of Elizabeth which were passed a few years later, for the relief of the poor, show that England was at that period as Ireland is now, infested by hordes of wandering beggars.

After the passing of the 43rd of Elizabeth, which gave to the destitute able-bodied a right to relief, I find no further mention of agrarian outrages, of extensive misery among the peasantry, or of the nuisance caused by large bodies of vagrants.

The effect of a public provision upon nominal rents will not be so rapid as upon crime. The effect will not, to any great extent, be produced directly, it will chiefly be produced through the effect upon wages.

But few of those who hold from five to twelve acres of land will throw up their holdings to enter an asylum, even though the food, clothing, and lodging, given in it may be greatly superior to their own. The cottier tenants will not generally give up their engagements; some, perhaps, those who have only cabins from their employers, may, as they are scarcely in a better position than the casual labourers. The casual labourers are the class upon whom the system will first act, and through whom the rents and wages of the first and second class will be affected. This class undergo such extensive and repeated privations, that there are frequently times when their wretchedness would drive many of them to seek the shelter of a house of industry, viz. during sickness and in the winter, owing to the wretched state of their

cabins. It is this class who, during the months of June, July, and August, suffer severely from the exhaustion of their potatoe store, as many of them have not more con-acre than yields potatoes for the three or four winter months, whilst the wives and children of the poorest of them, of those who are without even con-acre, scarcely get through those months without begging, by which, from April till October, they usually support themselves. Upon the establishment of houses of refuge these will be refused alms, and will thereby be driven to seek shelter in the public asylum. The Irish labourer might go into the house of refuge for a week at any time, as his cabin could not be injured by his absence. It contains nothing which could be stolen or injured. He needs scarcely to close the door when he leaves it.

After a few had been in the house of refuge and had felt the comfort which it afforded, and had ascertained that they could return to it with their families whenever work should fail to give them an equal subsistence, the whole class would become less solicitous to obtain land. It would cease to be of vital importance. The present eagerness of the casual labourer to supplant the small tenant and the cottier would abate, as those classes would no longer possess greater security for a subsistence than themselves. When, therefore, a small farm became dis-tenanted, or a cottier dismissed or dead, the casual labourers would not, as now, make rash promises to obtain the land, but pause to consider the advantage. It would be useless for them to change their situation but for a better; and unless it was evident to them that a small farm would give greater comfort than they already possessed, they would abstain from bidding. Thus, whilst the small tenantry would be less anxious to retain their farms, the labourers would be rather careless about obtaining them; nominal rents would therefore be quickly at an end. It is the constant pressure of the casual labourers which causes the excessive bidding for land.

As the competition for land decreased, the chance of ejection would also decrease. When the peasantry had no longer an inducement to bid more than the value of the land, it might not be easy for a landlord who had obtained a bad name to replace those whom he had dispossessed. At present the power of a landlord in Ireland is almost omnipotent. He may be said to hold the power of life and death. The moment the alternative of a public provision exists to the labouring classes, this dangerous power will cease, and Ireland will no longer be a land of lords and serfs. The same power cannot exist with capitalist occupiers. The capitalist and the owner of land are



on an equal footing when arranging the rent of a farm. It is not a question of life and death to a capitalist farmer whether he obtains a farm to day or six months hence. He will lose the profits of his capital during that period; but the landlord will lose the rent of his farm, and will suffer severely in the injury done to it whilst unoccupied. Every proprietor in England knows that a large share of the future rent will be absorbed in making tenantable a farm which has been six or twelve months unoccupied.

It is the general opinion in Ireland, that the condition of the peasantry cannot be improved until they cease to bid excessive rents for land; and that they will continue to bid those rents so long as the possession of land affords the only security against vagrancy or starvation.

*Galway.* F. 36.—Their condition can never be raised until they refrain from offering rents which will not leave to themselves a comfortable subsistence.—(Mr Birmingham.)

*Leitrim, Dromahair.* F. 38.—Mr Armstrong, himself a landlord, declares that “no improvement can be expected in the condition of the small occupiers until the competition for land becomes less among them, or until landlords cease to tempt them to pay more than the land is worth; but no landlord will be willing to relinquish the gain to himself arising from competition; to expect it would be to expect something contrary to human nature. The minds of all are so completely, and, in the present state of things, so justly occupied with the idea that the possession of some land is necessary to insure food, that some men would always be found willing to bid more than the real value.”

*Bar. Mohill.* F. 39.—Circumstances alone have created their inordinate desire to become possessors of land.—(Mr Norris.)

*Sligo.* F. 42.—Their condition certainly cannot be raised until they abstain from offering too high rents.—(Rev. Mr Brennan, P.P.)

*Dublin.* F. 44.—While the small occupiers depend entirely, or nearly so, on the produce of a small piece of land, their condition cannot be raised until they refrain from bidding such high rents.

*Kilkenny, Bar. Galnroy.* F. 45.—The condition of the peasantry never can be raised until they abstain from offering such high rents.—(All.)

*Bar. Gowran.* F. 47.—All the witnesses are agreed that, while the peasantry offer the present rents, their condition can scarcely be bettered.

*Louth.* F. 51.—The condition of the peasantry can scarcely be bettered, unless they abstain from offering the present high rents, or landlords have forbearance enough not to avail themselves of their reckless competition for land.

*Bar. Moyfenragh.* F. 54.—As long as the peasantry bid rents so high as the present, their condition can scarcely be raised; and such is their habitual desire of holding land, that the competition for it would not be very readily reduced.

*Queen's Co., Maryborough.* F. 57.—The condition of the peasantry cannot be raised until they abstain from offering rents which will not leave to themselves a comfortable subsistence; but this they are obliged to do, from the absence of manufactures and other employment, which renders land their only means of existence.—(William Gray, David Healey, and other farmers.)

*Wicklow.* F. 60.—The condition of the peasantry certainly cannot be

raised while they bid rents, as at present, which do not leave them a comfortable subsistence; but until they can get good employment, or some other means of subsistence, land is their only resource, and competition will be likely to keep rents up to their present exorbitant amount.

*Kerry, Bar. Iveagh.* F. 63.—Mr Butler answers, “I am satisfied that they have all so great a determination to get land, that they would sacrifice any means they might possess to obtain it.” Mr Mahoney says, “I employ several labourers regularly, and I see no anxiety in them to obtain land, and leave my employment.”

*Limerick, Bar. Connello.* F. 65.—“I employ many men regularly, and no man has ever left me for the sake of taking a few acres of land; they stay with me because they do not think they would do themselves any good by leaving me and trying to get land.”—(Mr Brown.)

*Tipperary.* F. 70.—The condition of the cottier tenantry cannot be raised until they abstain from offering rents which leave them but a bare subsistence.

*Waterford.* F. 72.—It is said, “There is no doubt that the high rents that are paid for small holdings are a cause of the poverty of the peasantry.”

The following extracts from the Appendix A to the Report of the Commissioners for *Inquiring* into the operation of the Poor-Laws in England and Wales, show that it is even possible by a public provision to make the peasantry refuse to hold land when given to them rent free, together with implements and seeds for its cultivation. Such was the result of the vicious system of out-door relief adopted in England during the last thirty years. The peasantry refused to hold land from an impression that, by holding it, they would weaken their claim to parish support.

*East Sussex.* A. 198.—Attempts have been made to introduce cottage allotments, but they have been ineffectual. The labourers show a decided reluctance to hire them; they think it might diminish their claim to relief.

*Sussex, Ewhurst.* 203.—The rector, from benevolent motives, has offered small allotments to the labourers, at a low rent: he has been able to let three acres only, and his offer of nine acres more has been rejected.

*Kent, Tenterden.* 211.—A small farm of twenty-seven acres has been hired for the purpose of letting out small allotments to the labourers, the parish advancing 1*l.*, and not proposing a reduction in allowances, and fixing the rent at 1*l.* per acre for meadow, and 15*s.* for arable, free of all charges; the men, however, refuse to take land; those who have been long on the parish prefer that resource to the exercise of industry; all have declined, except four.

*Essex, Dunmow.* 228.—About twenty acres of land have been let in cottage allotments, the occupation of which is much sought after by the industrious labourers; some of the idle do not care for land, because their pay is made up by the scale.

*Staffordshire.* 268.—There are, in different parts of Staffordshire, instances of labourers having been allowed to build cottages, subject to a nominal rent to the lord of the manor. But the acquisition of property in this way interferes with a resource which they begin now to rely on with greater confidence, their claim to parochial relief.

*Northamptonshire.* 406.—At Eydon, where one of the conditions of rating the land was, that no head-money should be paid to those who took it,

some few refused to have anything to do with it, and one man having had the land a year, gave it up. At Glapthorne, a parish belonging to Lord Cardigan, the choice of place and soil was so bad, that the people found it did not answer, and many of them ceased to have anything to do with their allotments.

*Surrey, Staines.* 576.—Many of them have ceased to apply to the vestry, and in consequence the applications there are much less numerous. Many of them have said, "But for the land, we should have been nearly starved." The committee say to them, "If you are troublesome to the parish the land shall be taken away." The applications to the vestry last year were fewer than for many previous years.

*Surrey, Buckland.* 577.—The instances are very rare in which land is given for the purpose of enabling paupers to take themselves off the parish.

I find that in the parish of Buckland, in Surrey, however, in 1829 and 1830, three experiments of this nature were made, and the success has been complete; I add the result in the words of the Rev. W. Keene, the rector:

"In the year 1829, two labourers were selected on account of their large families, one of which was then in the weekly receipt of an allowance from the parish; the other had received assistance, and was likely to become permanently chargeable. The proposal was made to them to take half an acre of land *at a nominal rent*,\* on condition of their making no further application to the parish, and to hold it only so long as they complied with this stipulation. Another labourer accepted the same quantity of land on the same terms in 1830. In none of these cases has there since been any disposition to be dependant on the parish for aid."

In the parish of *Midhurst*, land has been given at the rate of 1*l.* an acre to several persons who had been a constant burthen to the parish; these have in five instances taken themselves nearly off the parish, and it is considered that their excessive families (of from six to eight children each) alone prevented them doing so entirely; with more land they would support themselves. *At first there was a reluctance to take it, as they said, for fear of losing their parish pay.*

*West Riding of York.* 739.—There is no selection made of the occupiers, nor conditions imposed as to abstinence from parish relief, or on their conduct.

*Huntingdonshire.* 677.—At *Great Staughton*, near *Kimbolton*, forty-six allotments have been let, at the average farmer's rent, in quantities varying from a rood to half an acre; the tenants were stated to be all doing well, and that only one had applied for parish relief since he had been in possession of the land.

———. 678.—In *Bury and Orton Longville*, it was stated that the labourers were not anxious for the possession of land. At the latter place an instance was mentioned by the overseer, of a man to whom he had offered a piece of land rent free, and had further offered to purchase seed potatoes to sow the land, for which he was to be repaid at the occupier's convenience; the man declined to take the land, saying that his day's work was enough for him, and that he did not want the potatoes, because he knew that if he was in want the parish must support him. Cases similar to the above, however, are not common in this district. Except in the case at *Elton*, of the occupiers of two acres, there appeared to be no restraint on the tenants of the allotments in the different parishes against applying, in case of necessity, for relief from the parish.

*Cambridgeshire.* 678.—It was stated to me, however, by the overseer,

\* Nominal rent, in England, means "rent free."



that several of the tenants of these allotments received relief from the parish in winter.

*Somersetshire.* 440.—No stipulation is made against the receipt of parochial relief, but the result has been to the same effect, as only three of the number actually receive such relief; two of whom are infirm persons who would otherwise be in the workhouse, and the third, also infirm, belongs to Bristol; twenty-nine names were pointed out of persons who formerly had received relief, but had discontinued it since they had got land.

*Warminster.* 441.—Twenty acres have been many years let to the poor, in lots from twenty to fifty poles, at 4½d. the pole, on condition solely of the rent being punctually paid. But this is never considered at the pay table. Many have held their lots for several years. Twenty acres in addition were recently taken by the parish, and offered, rent free, on condition that all claim to parochial relief should be forfeited; *but no one would take it on these terms.*

*Frome.* 441.—The letting of gardens to the poor was an experiment on a small scale. In 1820, the Marquis of Bath granted about six acres of excellent pasture land in Frome. It was divided into small portions to the poor, seed being given them, on the condition of their relinquishing some a part, and in some cases all parish pay. Industrious persons were selected, and neither rent, poor rates, or tithes were paid. The letting was for one year.

442.—No manure was wanted. All went on pretty well the first year, under careful management. In the second year various complaints were heard. It was said the poor robbed each other. Some of them demanded their pay as before. Some refused to cultivate the ground, alleging that the very small portion of time at their command would be consumed in going to and from the gardens. Finally, it was relinquished as of no advantage to the parish or the paupers.

*Wiltshire, Westbury.* 442.—Labourers have also received land from the parish, but when they conceive that they have worked out their rent by abstaining from the parochial allowance to the same extent, they consider themselves entitled to full relief again.

*Bradford.* 442.—Forty acres in four portions, situated in different parts of the parish, were taken by the parish, and let in lots for spade husbandry, at from a half to a quarter of an acre. In three cases they were cultivated on account of the parish, the fourth was given up to occupants; but they have been abandoned with the exception of one portion, which is about to be given up.

The failure here is attributed to the want of an overlooker. No effect was produced upon the poor-rates.

*Shepton Mallet.* 442.—Portions have been hitherto taken by persons of a superior class, but only twelve acres are at present let. No effect has been produced upon the poor-rate, so that it is in contemplation to give the whole up, when the term for which it was taken expires.

*Trowbridge.* 442.—Seven acres of land were hired by the parish three years ago, and were given out in lots from thirty to forty perches, or more, if required, free of rent, tools being found; no conditions were made. The people appeared very indifferent about it, and did not take much trouble to cultivate it. They sold the crops, and then came, as before, to the pay table.

The experiment is considered a total failure, and is about to be abandoned.

In the cases of Bradford, Frome, Westbury, Shepton Mallet, and Trowbridge, the character and previous habits of the poor, *and probably the certainty of receiving parochial relief*, appear to have caused the failure of the

experiment. The circumstance of the land being granted by the parish was in itself a source of suspicion and distrust on the part of the poor, who look with a jealous eye upon any interference, even for their good.

The following statement, taken from a report made by Dr John Smith in 1798, to the Scotch Agricultural Society on the state of Argylshire, shows that assessments were not at that period adopted in that county—that the poor depended upon the miserable collections made at the places of worship, which were much to the extent of those now made in Ireland. The statement also shows that the holdings were small, the rents exorbitant, and vagrancy extensive. In fact, it shows a state of society very like to that of Ireland, and to that of every country before it possesses a legal provision for the destitute.

P. 47.—In this country there are, as yet, no poor-rates or assessments. The poor are supported by begging, by the collections made at the church doors, a few mortifications or bequeathments, and other casualties. Such as are able to beg make a tolerable shift to live, as the people in general are disposed to be charitable. But all the relief that can be given to those who are unable to go about, is scanty and inadequate. The poor, it may be said, are, for the most part, supported by the poor. Some of our heritors have no residence in the county; and many of our gentlemen, who think themselves wiser than their fathers, are not always where they ought to be on Sunday to give to the poor their offering. In the meantime, if some of our gentlemen will have no religion they should have some charity, and at least send their collection for the poor. By the laws of God and our country the poor have a right to be maintained, and the withholding that from them to which they have a just and legal title, is an injury so much the greater, as they have the less ability to enforce their claim. Assessments would make the burden alight, as it ought, equally upon all, whether they attend church or not, whether they reside on their estates or elsewhere. Charity, justice, and even policy, require that this should be done without delay. The poor have increased, the weekly collection in many places diminished, and the price of all the necessities of life is greatly raised. The arguments commonly used against assessments are but the suggestions of iniquity and avarice. Assessments have become common in the south of Scotland, and (as the exercise of justice and charity always must be) have been productive of good and not of evil. They have enabled the poor to live with more comfort, and made the trifling rate fall on those who are liable to pay it, in a just and equitable proportion. The non-resident, the graceless, and the sectary, are obliged to contribute their share; and the labouring poor, the most numerous class of the people, are attached to a happy constitution, which makes a legal provision for their support when they can no longer support themselves. By assessments, the begging poor would not only be more comfortably maintained at home, but also at less expense to the public, as their labour at home would go a considerable length to support them; whereas, in travelling about, their time and labour turns to no account. Besides, the blind and the lame require one or two to attend them every day that they are going about. By assessments, the burden on the tenants would be less heavy and more equal; and the small difference to the rich would easily be made up by retrenching, now and then, a superfluous dish or bottle, an useless trinket or a game at cards.

P. 39.—That high rents are a spur to improvement and exertion, is a common and, to a certain extent, a just maxim. No doubt there may be some

who, if they had the land for nothing, would be ruined by their indolence ; but the more common case is, that when a tenant sees that all his exertions will not do, he becomes dispirited and desperate, and allows himself to be carried along by the stream which he cannot stem. The land suffers, the tenant fails, the farm gets a bad name, and the rent must be lowered ; thus the landlord as well as the tenant suffers by raising the rent higher or faster than the improvement of the land will bear. A substantial tenant is generally cautious of engaging to pay a rent that is exorbitant ; he sees the success of those who invest their money in other branches of business, and he follows their example if he has not the prospect of a farm's yielding him full interest for his money, and an adequate return for his diligence and labour ; whereas, he who has least to lose is often the most forward to offer, and the landlord is often tempted to accept the offer, without considering that a sufficient capital is necessary for paying the rent and improving the land. Instances of ruin to the tenant and loss to the landlord, from too high rents, are not unfrequent, especially on some of the smaller estates. Most of the farmers toil hard, live poorly ; and for one who has a trifle for his pains, perhaps two give their pains for nothing. Many who have old leases, obtained before the late rise in land and in its produce took place, are very well ; as are also many of those who have sheep stocks, as their possessions are managed with less expense, and the value of some of them was not well known till they were tried under the sheep system.

The reduction of rents, which will follow a Poor Law in Ireland, will not be an injury to the landlord. The only advantage to the landlord is the amount of rent which he actually receives. It matters to him but little whether the tenant promises to pay 5*l.* or 100*l.* an acre, if he can and does only pay 2*l.* or 3*l.* But that portion of the rent which is nominal to the landlord, is destructive of all hope and, consequently, of all energy in the tenant. It is not the amount of rent which is now taken from the tenant which constitutes the injury, but the manner in which it is taken. The amount which the labourers were paid in the pauperized districts of England, in relief and in wages combined, did not constitute the evil of the allowance system, but the manner in which the labourers received the amount. Under the improved system, the labourers frequently obtain more in wages than they had previously received in wages and allowance combined ; and yet, so much greater is their industry, that their employers are benefitted though they pay a larger amount. The labourers of the pauper districts of England were, by the allowance system, made to feel that industry was incapable of improving their condition, and they became idle and listless. The peasantry, or pauper tenantry, of Ireland are under a similar disadvantage. They, too, are made to feel by the nominal rent system that industry and enterprize can be of no advantage to them, and they become listless and apathetic.

The rent which the peasantry will bid, after the establishment of houses of refuge, will be regulated by the probability of its leaving to themselves and their families a subsistence as



good, or nearly as good, as the public provision. If the public provision be only equal to that which they have hitherto been allowed to retain out of the produce of their farms, then they will bid a rent about equal to the amount which they have in most years paid. Making the fullest allowance for the absence of capital and skill on the part of the Irish tenantry, they would easily meet their payments, were they fixed at the amount annually paid by them on an average of the last five years.

Though the check given to the competition for land by a public provision for the destitute, will not diminish in the slightest degree the payments hitherto made by the peasantry, it will cause their future payments to be greatly increased. The superior interest which they will possess in the production, when they feel that all beyond a fair sum will remain to them, will quickly lead them to ascertain how their crops may be increased, and will stimulate them to personal exertion in aid of their increased knowledge. The hardy manner in which they have been reared will enable them, out of comparatively small means, to accumulate, and thus gradually to obtain improved stock and implements of agriculture, in aid of a further increase in production. These expectations are not chimerical ; they have been realised in those cases in which, by lowering the nominal rent, hope has been created in the peasantry, even when leases have not been granted, provided the peasantry have felt to depend upon the good faith of their landlords. With every increase of capital and skill, and their attendant increase of production, the landlord will not merely have an increased security for the rent which his tenant has contracted to pay, but a fairer prospect that those rents which are now but nominal will one day be realised. His tenantry will then find those rents comparatively light, which they now deem, and which really are beyond their power to pay, and from which they now shrink in despair.

No better proof, perhaps, can be adduced of the actual rent being in the inverse ratio to the nominal rent, than a contrast of the rents bid and paid for large and for small farms. On an average of years the large farms yield greater returns to the proprietor than the small farms, although the latter are in all cases let much higher. The lower rents of the large farms are always paid, and with punctuality ; whilst the rents of small farms are always in arrear.

Though a public provision in Ireland will prevent wages from falling below the amount required to subsist the labourer and his family, as it will at the same time destroy vagrancy, the employer will not be injured.

The families which are now occasionally supported by vagrancy are supported by the farmers, and will, under the change of system, still be supported by them. The only difference will be, that the farmers will give wholly in wages what they now give partly in alms. The change will be in the distribution, and not in the amount of the fund for the support of the labourers. It cannot be an injury to the employers to require them to give in wages what they now give in alms, to maintain the wives and children of their own labourers, instead of assisting to maintain the families of labourers who are not employed by them. The change which will be effected, will be similar to that lately accomplished in England. The English labourer received wages for his own support, and charity for the support of his wife and children. Vagrancy is to the Irish labourer, what the scale system was to the English. The same perversion of the wages-fund, which arose in the pauper districts of England, is the characteristic of the vagrancy system of Ireland. All are supported, only A supports the wives and children of the labourers employed by B, and vice versa.

We have seen that the first step towards improvement in Ireland must be the suppression of the present excessive desire in the peasantry to possess land, and that the right to a provision in a house of refuge is the means by which the dangerous extent of the desire can be safely prevented. The improvement in the physical condition of the labouring classes of Ireland can only be ensured by the same means.

The capitalist can generally lower wages in any part of Europe to a mere subsistence. He can at most times delay his work, whether in agriculture or manufactures, a week or a fortnight without great inconvenience, but the labourer's stomach cannot be kept without food two days. It is very common to talk of wages being regulated by the proportion which the supply of labour bears to the demand for it. Labour is treated as a marketable commodity, and as if the workman was as able to withhold his labour as the employer is to delay his work. The fact is, however, that the labourer and the employer are in the same position towards each other when making a bargain for wages as would be two dealers, the one holding a cargo of corn and wanting a cargo of oranges, the other holding a cargo of oranges and wanting a cargo of corn. The oranges will be rotten in a fortnight, the corn will keep two or three years. The only times at which the workman is on a par with his employer in making a bargain for wages, is at harvest time with the farmers, and during an extraordinary

period of demand with the manufacturers. Such periods occur with the manufacturers once in three or four years. On these occasions time becomes equally important to both the employer and the workman. The harvest will be injured if it is not collected within a few days, and the great profits offered will be lost to the manufacturer if his goods be later in the market than those of his neighbours. The favourable point to the workman at these periods is, that delay is impossible. With such exceptions, in almost all the endeavours of the farmers, master weavers, and spinners in England, to reduce the wages of their workmen, they have been successful. "Farmers turned off their men or refused to employ them at fair wages, thereby causing a surplus fraudulently; they then took the men from the parish at reduced wages paid out of the poor rates."—*Appendix A to Report of Poor Law Inquiry in England*, p. 203. But though the employers reduced wages, fortunately they could not reduce *the subsistence* of the working people below that recognised by the parish, as what they did not pay in wages they were forced to pay in poor-rates. The same support to the funds of the labourers has existed in all countries in which the right to a public provision is recognised, and thus it is that the people of those countries are in a superior condition to the people in countries in which a public provision does not exist. The labour-rates in England showed the consequence of removing the right to relief. By labour-rates the right to relief was virtually withdrawn. The rate-payers, who are the employers, decided upon the wages to be paid to the labourers, and classed them according to the size of their families. In most parishes single men were valued at 5s., but in many parishes they were valued as low as 4s. a week, and if the system had lasted it is probable that they would have been valued at 3s., and perhaps even at 2s. when England, like Ireland, would have had a potatoe-fed peasantry having sufficient to sustain life, but not to prevent premature decay. Fortunately it was impossible to plan a labour-rate which would bear equally upon all the rate-payers, and consequently every labour-rate carried the principles of its own destruction.—(See *Appendix D English Poor Law Inquiry*).

If employment in Ireland could be suddenly increased one third, which would be required to occupy their leisure time, the peasantry would not derive any benefit—their wages would not be increased. Each employer would make more cottier tenants, in other words, would take more permanent labourers. He would get the extra fourth of the labourer's time in return for the relief of mind, or security as to subsistence, which the labourer



would feel from being made a cottier. The casual labourer is in constant anxiety lest he should be unable to earn sufficient to pay the rent of his con-acre, as, in default of payment, he will be deprived of food for the succeeding year. The cottier tenant is relieved from this anxiety; he is permanently employed by his landlord, and the payment of the rent of his potatoe land is certain, because the use of the land is the reward of his labour. The desire to secure the rent of his potatoe land causes the anxiety of the casual labourer to become a cottier tenant. The cottier does not get better or more food than the casual labourer, and he works one fourth harder. His only advantage is being relieved from anxiety as to the payment of the rent. If the number of casual labourers could be instantly reduced one third, which would be equivalent to increasing employment one fourth, the effect, if there were any, upon wages, would be but temporary. During the last seven years, the average annual number of emigrants which have reached the United States and Canada, from the United Kingdom, has not been less than 60,000; of this number, half, or 30,000, were Irish. Thus, in this way alone, has Ireland been relieved of 210,000 persons during the last seven years. From every parish in Ireland, some of the labourers have emigrated during the last few years, and yet those who remain say that the emigration has not produced the slightest effect upon rents or upon wages.

*Galway* F. 133.—The number of those who have left has not had the slightest effect either in reducing rents or in increasing wages.—(All.)—"I think that competition for employment has been rather on the increase. It would be necessary that from two-thirds to one-half the actual population should be removed before wages could naturally rise to 10*d.* per day."—(Mr Connolly.)

*Kilkenny*. F. 135.—Emigration has not been sufficiently extensive to reduce the competition for labour and for small holdings. It is estimated by the majority of the witnesses that it would require the removal of at least one-fourth of the able-bodied male population to give constant employment to the remainder at 10*d.* a-day.

*King's County*. F. 135.—The emigration that has as yet taken place has not had any effect on either wages or rents. The witnesses find it difficult to say what number should be taken from the able-bodied population to afford the labourer steady wages at a moderate rate. They think that though 20 per cent. were removed, it would have but little effect upon wages; they do not think it would raise them 1*d.* per day.

*County Louth*. F. 135.—Many of the witnesses thought it would be necessary to take away nearly one-half from the present population to reduce the competition for land and wages so as to allow a subsistence to the labourer equal to steady wages at 10*d.* a-day.

*Meath*. F. 136.—Except in busy seasons, it would require perhaps one-third of the population to be withdrawn to secure the remainder steady employment at 10*d.* a-day.

*Clure*. F. 137.—There has not been sufficient emigration in any way to

affect the price of labour. In order to raise the price of labour, it would be necessary to remove nearly one-half the labourers.

*Kerry.* F. 138.—“We think that before wages are raised to 10*d.* a-day throughout the year, one-third of the present labouring population must be removed.”—(Messrs Powell, Roche, Chute, Peel, and O’Leary.)

*Limerick, Bar. Conello.* F. 138.—The emigration which has taken place has not been sufficient to reduce the competition for labour, or for holdings, so as to raise wages or lower rents. “I think one-half of the labourers of the barony must be sent away before work at 10*d.* per day would be found for the remainder regularly through the year.”—(Messrs Brown and Ruckle.)

*Bar. Coshlea.*—From 100 to 200 persons per annum have emigrated from this barony. The number has been fewer during the past few years.—(Rev. Mr Mornan, P.P., and Mr Russell.)

With respect to the effect produced on the wages of labour and the rent of land by the withdrawal of so many competitors, it is said “They are scarcely missed.”—(Mr Bennett, &c.)

*Down, Bar. Ineagh.* F. 140.—Emigration has not had any effect on wages or rents. “If all the labourers in the parish were to go away, we could do the work ourselves.”—(Morgan.)—“Oh, no; sometimes there would be a few wanting.”—(M’Loughlin.)—“Well, maybe a few would be wanting by the shopkeepers and large farmers, but the small farmers can do their own work.”—(Morgan.)

*Bar. Lecale.*—Mr Seed, a most intelligent farmer, said, “There are particular times at which all the labourers are employed, such as harvest and sowing time, and also there are times at which far fewer could do the work.” This period of the year (end of July and beginning of August) seems to be the worst season for the day-labourer in this part of the country, because the course of agriculture is of that nature as not to afford him employment in summer. In most places in England it is quite the contrary, for the labourer finds employment then in haymaking, in the hoeing and cultivation of turnips, in preparing fallow for wheat, and in mixing and in carting compost manures.

*Tyrone.* F. 141.—“The emigration has been by no means sufficient to reduce the competition for labour; it should be great and constant to produce that effect”—(Rev. Mr. Stack.)—“I think, if one out of every four were taken out of the labourers, the rest would have tolerable employment, but I cannot rely on this calculation, for sometimes they are all wanted, and sometimes very few.”—(Rev. Mr Stack.)

One fourth of the population of Ireland might be withdrawn, and yet wages not be raised. To emigrate 1,500,000 or 2,000,000 of people in one year would be impossible. To spread the emigration over a number of years would not have the desired effect upon wages. The natural increase of the population would supply nearly as many as the emigration would subtract.

The system lately adopted in England, under the Poor Law Amendment Act, will prove to be a most efficient institution in support of the earnings of the working classes. The system which it has displaced only supplied the deficiency in wages by substituting charity, and thus much evil was produced. The evil was not in the amount expended, however, but in the way in which it was expended. Under the amended system

as great a sum, or perhaps a greater, is given to the labouring classes, than they received under the old system, but it is so given as to encourage, whilst under the old system it discouraged industry.

The workhouse system, though perfect in its effect on wages, cannot create any countervailing evils.

No one can take relief who is employed, and no one will accept employment at a rate much below the subsistence provided in the workhouse. The workhouse provision constitutes a certain as well as a safe minimum to earnings. At a certain point it brings the whole capital of the nation to compete for the workman against the individual capitalist. Although the practical working of such a measure is the creation of a minimum to earnings, it must not be confounded with the attempts formerly made by the legislature and more recently by Trades Unions. The practical working of a workhouse provision is only to fix a rate of wages below which it will not be worth the while of any individual, no matter what his calling, age, or skill, to accept employment. The legislature formerly attempted, and so also did the Trades Unions attempt, to fix or prevent comparative rates between trades or between workmen in the same trade, and of course their objects have invariably been evaded.

Most nations have considered a public provision principally, to use the words of Sir F. Morton Eden, as a "*measure of police*,"—as a means of repressing vagrancy, though in no slight degree, unquestionably, Poor Laws were created from feelings of benevolence towards those who were destitute. The view taken of the effects of a public provision by modern writers differs but little from that taken by our ancestors. It seems to have escaped all, that the same institution which rescues from misery and crime those who have become destitute, may by its indirect influence prevent the great mass of society from requiring its aid, and that those who are far removed from seeking its charity may be sustained in their prosperity by its influence.

Those who proposed to institute Poor Laws in England could scarcely have foreseen the evils which have ensued from their late mal-administration, any more than they could have foreseen those beneficial effects which were produced in addition to the contemplated suppression of mendicancy and the reduction of crime. Nothing is more difficult than to discern, amongst a number of co-existing events, the precise connection which each bears to the other in the relation of cause and effect. Our ancestors established laws for the relief of the poor as a means of suppressing mendicancy, which



they considered to be the original source of a variety of evils. The institution had the effect of suppressing mendicancy, and many other co-existing evils disappeared at the same time, and the country rose into prosperity. This simultaneous disappearance of a variety of evils naturally strengthened the impression as to the extensive and baneful influence of mendicancy. It was not perceived that the remedy for vagrancy was at the same time the remedy for the other evils—that all emanated from one common source. We have long lost sight of the advantages which have been derived by England from her poor laws; and lately stood aghast at the evils which the mal-administration of them during thirty years had produced. The late inquiry in Ireland has shown us the evils which they have remedied, compared with which those of the late mal-administration shrink into insignificance.

The same motive which led to the introduction of poor laws into England and Scotland—the desire of repressing the immense mass of vagrancy, with the accompanying crime and misery—seems to have induced most of the countries of Europe in which they exist to adopt them. And not only has the object sought been attained, but a general increase of prosperity has ensued. Denmark appears to be the last country in Europe into which poor laws have been introduced, and although the system in that country, as in most others, nearly approaches to the vicious system of out-door relief, lately abolished in England, yet the general benefit to society is unquestionable. — (*See Appendix F. to the English Poor Law Inquiry.*)

For the public provision to place a minimum to wages, it is not necessary for many labourers to enter the houses of refuge, any more than it will be necessary for many to enter them to create a feeling of security as to subsistence, and thus a decrease of crime. It is only necessary that the diet and rules in the work-houses should be such, that the labourers will not feel much reluctance to enter them, though they will prefer to remain out if their labour or their land will produce them nearly an equal degree of comfort. When this feeling is created, it will be vain for any employer to dismiss his workmen with a view to driving them to accept lower wages, or to dismiss his small tenantry with a view to extorting higher rents. The workmen will not as formerly in England under the vicious out-door allowance system, get assistance in aid of wages from the public provision, and they must wholly abstain from private service, and from the occupation of land, if they avail themselves of the provision in the house of refuge, in fact, withdraw from the labour market.

If the employers of a county combined, they could not drive the labourers to accept wages much below the provision in the house. The answer of the labourers to their employers would be—"We had better, Sir, go into the house of refuge than accept such wages." The public provision will have removed the power of the employer to starve the labourer into compliance. Whilst the out-door system in England gave in relief what the labourer yielded in wages, the endeavour of the employer to reduce wages was as successful as if there had been no provision. If there is no provision the labourer is starved into compliance. If there is an out-door provision, from which the deficiency in wages will be supplied, it is immaterial to him whether he has high or low wages. The certainty that working-men will not accept less than a certain sum as labourers, nor consent to retain less than that sum as small tenants, will deter those under whom they hold land, or for whom they work, from offering less, and thus the struggle will rarely if ever be attempted. The farmers in England often say, "We give the wages which the magistrates allow," meaning the parish allowance.

In the confined view of poor laws which now prevails, in which they are seen only as a measure of police or of benevolence, many dreading the evils which have lately resulted in England from the out-door system adopted since 1796, think that the public provision should be confined to those who by age or by accident are permanently disabled ; or, at furthest, that it should only be extended to the sick and to orphan children. Viewing a public provision as placing a minimum to earnings, and thus as preventing the various evils which have been shown now to affect Ireland, I am convinced of the propriety of granting a right to the able-bodied to demand it. It has, however, been a question to which I have given much consideration, whether it is well to give the right to any other class. If the right is not given to the able-bodied man, his earnings will be reduced to the bare support of himself and family, even during his youth and vigour, and consequently he cannot provide against sickness, want of work, old age, and, in the event of his premature decease, against the destitution of those who are dependent upon him. It would be a cruel mockery to bid the Irish peasant to save against those contingencies. If the able-bodied man has the right to relief, his earnings are supported during the long period of his vigour, and he is enabled to provide against the contingencies to which he and his family are liable ; he therefore ought to save, and then to give relief in any of those contingencies is to encourage improvidence.

It is a very common error to suppose, that to prevent the labouring classes quitting their employments and seeking to enter the houses of refuge, the diet in them must be much inferior to that generally possessed by the labouring classes, and the work much harder than that which labourers must perform to earn their subsistence, and that as wages fall the diet in the houses must be reduced. The direct reverse of this is the truth. The labouring classes will not enter houses of refuge in which the diet is only equal to that which they can obtain by independent industry, particularly if the work in them is as severe as that to which they must submit when earning their subsistence. It must be self-evident that no one in his senses would enter under such circumstances.

I lately inspected, with the assistant Commissioner for that district, several workhouses in Nottinghamshire, with the diet in one of them I was particularly struck.

Upon questioning the master of the workhouse, we found that the breakfast consisted of bread and milk. The dinner of meat and vegetables three or four days in the week, on the other days of soup and vegetables and plum dumplings. The supper of bread and milk, and bread and cheese and beer on alternate nights. The quantity is unlimited, and every inmate is allowed as much as he chuses to eat. For the quality of the food I can vouch, as I carefully inspected the provisions. The bread was made of the best wheaten flour, and better could not be found at the table of any person in the county. The milk was excellent, the cheese was as good as Derbyshire can produce, and such as a magistrate of the neighbourhood, who was present, stated to be that commonly used by the gentry. The meat was of prime quality; and to the old people mixed tea at eight shillings the pound was given. In fine, I believe that few persons whose incomes do not exceed 500*l.* a-year fare better than the inmates of that workhouse, with the exception of having meat every day for dinner. The master informed us that feather beds only are used in that house. Although superfluous, my friend asked the master if he thought the labourers earning their subsistence in the district fared equally well with the inmates of his house. He answered, certainly not, their fare is many degrees worse. I then asked him whether able-bodied persons often applied for admission. He said, very rarely. I asked him if he imposed hard work. He told me that he had no means of setting the people to work. Besides the good fare, and the freedom from work, the sexes are not separated by day or by night. Smoking is allowed, and I have no doubt that even spirits can be



procured, and without very great difficulty. I asked the master how he accounted for the able-bodied labourers not applying for admission to such a comfortable asylum. "Oh! Sir," said he, "I keep the key of the door, and I very seldom allow the able-bodied people to go out, which they don't like. So, if they can possibly live out, they won't come in." He told us that this house belonged to fifteen parishes, that he had rarely known it to be full, and that it would only hold eighty people.

The Reverend Charles Clarke,\* who had for many years been a Guardian of the Poor in the incorporation of Mudford and Lothingland, in Suffolk, told me during the Poor Law Inquiry, that the practice in that hundred had for many years been to refuse relief to the able-bodied out of the workhouse; and that the able-bodied would never enter when they could procure the ordinary wages of the country, though with those wages they could only obtain a subsistence many degrees inferior to that given in the workhouse. The fare of Mudford and Lothingland was in every respect equal to that in Nottinghamshire, with, I think, the addition of meat every day in the week. The inmates were not required to work—smoking and beer were allowed, and there was no separation of sexes; but freedom of egress and ingress to the able-bodied was strictly prohibited.

This restriction is the check which can with success be opposed to idleness, and without the slightest danger of evil. Restriction, order, and regularity are peculiarly irksome to the idle and dissolute. Restriction is requisite to prevent those who take the relief from interfering with the employment of those who are living by industry, and to draw the line between those who accept the public provision, and those who are living by their own exertions. Such a line must be drawn to keep the number of applicants for the public provision at the lowest point consistent with producing the desired effect upon earnings.

Many tales are told of the anxiety of persons to enter the workhouse, and the difficulty of getting them out when once they get in. These tales mostly relate to places which exist before the amended laws are put in force, and should rather be termed parish lodging-houses, in which persons can live rent-free, than workhouses. In most of them restriction as to ingress and egress is extremely slight, whilst to others there is neither master, matron, nor door porter. Such were the majority of the workhouses in Sussex and Kent before the amendment of the Poor Laws. I do not believe it would be possible to draw the labourers of the East Riding of Yorkshire into

\* See his report on the incorporated hundreds. Appendix C to English Inquiry.

workhouses, so long as the least restraint is put on freedom of action. The labourer in the East Riding, mostly receive throughout the year from 7s. to 8s. a week in money, and are fed by their employers, Sunday included. The feeding is as much beef, bacon, and good wheaten bread, twice a day, as they chuse to eat, and with strong beer to drink. With such pay, no amount of luxury could reconcile the labourer to restraint.

The impression that the working classes are very desirous to obtain the public provision has been chiefly generated by the large number who, in the Southern counties of England, have, from the commencement of this century till the amendment of the Poor Laws, received relief from the rates. This impression is erroneous. The working classes did not seek the parish aid, it was forced upon them by their employers, who seem to have used every effort to pauperize them. The evils of the Poor Law system commenced about 1796, during the rise in the price of corn, which lasted with little intermission till 1812. It did not commence, be it remembered, by the desire of the labourers, but by a general combination of their employers, who resorted to the scale system to avoid raising wages in proportion to the increased price of corn; and from that time to the present a constant war has been kept up by the employers in many parts of England against those labourers who struggled against receiving pay from the Poors Rates. If one employer in a parish drove his labourers in part upon the rates, the others were compelled to resort to the practice in self defence. I do not impute any bad design to those who have thus acted. I believe they were ignorant of the extensive evils they were about to produce. They did the mischief as mischief is commonly done, by adopting momentary expedients without having considered more than one probable effect.

The appendices to the Report of the Poor Law Inquiry Commissioners abounds with evidence of the systematic manner in which the labouring classes were pauperized by their employers, since the close of the last century.

*West Sussex.* A. 546.—(Appendix A, Poor Law Inquiry for England and Wales).—I found great difficulty in ascertaining accurately the period at which the system of relieving able-bodied men, on account of their families, originated; but this difficulty, as relates to the western part of the county of Sussex, was removed by the kindness of Mr Woods, who stated to me, that as well as he could recollect after so distant a time, the system of parochial relief, on account of the dearth of bread, commenced after the high prices of 1795. It was then only occasional till the still higher prices of 1800 and 1801, when the magistrates of the bench of Chichester recommended (*instead of advancing wages in proportion to the times*) the various parishes to make certain allowances, in consideration of the higher prices of corn. This mode was very generally acted upon; but being attended with some difficulties, a paper was drawn up and calculated by one of the influential magistrates of

the day, and having been approved of by others, was circulated and recommended to the parish officers for their guidance.—(*Report of Mr Maclean.*)

*Warwickshire.* A.—In obedience to the instructions, I made inquiry into the origin, in these counties, of the system of applying the parish rates in aid of wages; and I found the period usually referred to was during the years of scarcity towards the close of the last century. In Warwickshire, the year 1797 was mentioned as the date of its commencement in that county, and the scales of relief giving it authority were published in each of these counties previously to the year 1800. *It was apprehended by many at that time, that either the wages of labour would rise to a height from which it would be difficult to reduce them when the cause for it had ceased, or that during the high prices the labourers might have had to undergo privations to which it would be unsafe to expose them.* To meet the emergency of the time, various schemes are said to have been adopted, such as weekly distributions of flour, providing families with clothes, or maintaining entirely a portion of their families, until at length the practice became general.—(*Report of Mr Villiers.*)

To be successful in putting a minimum to earnings, it is evident that the public provision offered to the working classes must be at least equal to that which their earnings, as labourers or tenants, should yield them. But to surmount the great objection, which the labouring classes entertain to the restriction of a house of refuge, as to ingress and egress, a restriction which is essential to the working of such an institution, the diet and other comforts must be much superior to those to which the labourers are accustomed.

The course adopted in the highly pauperized districts of England, in reducing the diet in the houses below that possessed by the labourers living by industry, is warranted by the peculiar state of the population. The whole body of the labourers having become demoralized by the vicious system of outdoor relief, are now making every endeavour to resist the improved system, and consequently extraordinary measures are required to frustrate their attempts.

At present it will not be well to give in Ireland such a diet as will induce the peasantry to throw up land and employment, unless, as small tenants, they are allowed to retain more of the produce of their farms, or as labourers they are paid higher wages. To increase the earnings of the labourers out of the present production the receipts of the landlords must be diminished, and a reduction would ruin a large number of them. I have already shown that it will not be necessary to raise earnings to suppress agrarian outrages and to destroy the evil genius of Ireland—nominal rents. As the country begins to prosper and wealth to increase, the provision in the houses of industry may be raised in order to force an improved rate of earnings, until the condition of the Irish peasantry is raised to the condition of the labourers in such counties as Northumberland, Durham, and the East Riding of Yorkshire.



Having described the system by which the evils of Ireland can be removed, I feel that it is imperative upon me to show that the means of giving effect to the system can be provided. I shall, therefore, point out what amount of money I believe to be required in the present state of that country; what I consider to be the best mode of obtaining the required funds; and the nature of the local management which is required and can be supplied.

The expenditure will consist of the cost of erecting and fitting up houses for the reception of the destitute, and the expense of maintaining the buildings, the establishments, and the inmates.

The expense of erecting houses will, of course, be a single and final charge, the expense of maintaining them and their establishments will be a fixed annual charge, and the expense of maintaining the inmates a fluctuating annual charge.

With respect to the cost of erecting houses, if one is placed in the centre of each district of 100 square miles, they will be ten miles apart and sufficiently numerous. As the radius of the circle is five miles, no person will be more than five miles from an asylum. The area of Ireland will give about 500 such districts, and consequently about 500 establishments will be required. I do not think it will be wise to place the establishments more distant from each other than ten miles. The excuse for vagrancy will not be destroyed if they are much further apart. A person feigning great fatigue, sickness, or personal infirmity, or a woman having young children with her, will certainly obtain alms if they are more than five miles from a house of refuge; as it would be cruel to refuse relief when those who seek it are evidently incapable of reaching an asylum. Moreover, the important effects to be produced upon crime, rents, and wages, might be endangered if the establishment were much more distant. The peasantry would not become accustomed to them, and in going to them they would be leaving the neighbourhood of their friends. These risks would not be compensated by any saving which could possibly arise from the reduction in the number of the establishments. It is even probable that the increased size of the districts might more than proportionately increase the expense of providing the establishments. In many districts, buildings already exist capable of being converted into asylums for the destitute, and sufficiently large for districts of 100 square miles each; such buildings might frequently be obtained at one fourth the cost of erecting them. A house capable of holding 200 persons would be quite sufficient for the demands of each district of 100 square miles.

excepting when the district includes a town over 15,000 or 20,000 inhabitants, of which size there are not twenty towns in Ireland. Unless some extraordinary circumstance arose in a district, I do not think 200 persons would often be driven to accept the shelter of the house of refuge. The effects upon crime, rents and wages, will arise from the peasantry knowing that they have the power to enter whenever they may please; and if half-a-dozen able-bodied men in the district do enter, the knowledge will be as effectually promulgated as if every able-bodied man had entered. If the food given in the houses of refuge be not far better than that which is ordinarily possessed by the peasantry, the whole of the houses in the counties forming the East Coast, from Antrim to Waterford, will, during the greater portion of the year, contain only widows, orphans, aged people, and now and then a few ejected tenants or labourers, who cannot obtain employment. The numbers, without other means than vagrancy, are supposed by many to be very great. I again express my disbelief on the point. There is no subject upon which it is more difficult to gain evidence on which any reliance can be placed. Knowing the manner in which it was gained by the Irish poor inquiry, I do not place the slightest faith in their statements. Though no one more highly appreciates the zeal, industry, and intelligence with which the majority of the assistant commissioners on that inquiry performed their duties than I, or have a higher opinion of the general excellence and trust-worthiness of the evidence collected by them, which I believe to be the best collected body of evidence in existence, I am so well aware of the peculiar difficulties which are opposed to a successful inquiry on the subject at issue, and the perfect inadequacy of the means which they possessed, that I cannot but feel a total absence of faith in their statements in this respect. A machinery as extensive as that for ascertaining the number of persons of each religious persuasion might possibly, if well applied, approach sufficiently near for practical purposes; I believe, however, that there is but one sure test, and that is a workhouse open to all who find it worth while to enter.

However, if I should prove to be wrong as to the numbers who would require relief, it is scarcely possible that I can be wrong in stating that houses for each district, capable of holding 200 persons, will be sufficient. In giving relief, the great object is to guard against those receiving it who have other means of living save vagrancy or crime. The earnings of the members of a labourer's family in Ireland, with the exception of those of the able-bodied men, are not worthy of consideration; if, therefore, the able-

bodied men were received into institutions, relief might be given in food to their wives and children at their homes, without any danger of relief being mixed with wages, or of persons living upon the public provision instead of by industry. The head of the family would always be anxious to leave the house, and would do so as soon as he could get employment, and the moment that he left the house, the relief given to his wife and children might be withheld.

As 500 houses capable of containing 200 each would be capable of holding 100,000 persons, if able-bodied men only were received into them, estimating each family at 5, a father, mother, and 3 children, the house-room would be sufficient with which safely to administer relief, both out and in-door, to 500,000 persons. To which number may be added 200,000 or 300,000 infirm through age or accident, who might, in case of emergency, safely be relieved at their houses. Thus, with such establishments, relief might be safely administered to 800,000 persons, or to 1-10th of the whole of the population of Ireland. I have made this calculation merely to show the efficiency of the establishments I propose, and not from a belief that 1-10th of that number will at any season seek the relief. The outlay for building houses of refuge in Ireland ought not to exceed one million. The estimate for building and finishing a workhouse in England, capable of holding 200 persons, is something less than 2,000*l.* In Ireland, stones fit for such buildings are to be found every where in abundance, labour is much cheaper than in England; and, from the rude nature of their habitations, accommodation for the peasantry need not be so costly as for English labourers. The plan adopted in England of purchasing existing premises, which may frequently be bought for a fourth of the cost of erecting, and made suitable at a trifling expense, might constantly be adopted in Ireland. By such a course the supply of houses might be greatly reduced below one million. The expense of maintaining the inmates would of course depend upon their numbers. The cost per head, however, will not exceed 6*d.* per week each, or 26*s.* a year; it is easy to arrive at this calculation. The instances are very rare of the family of an Irish peasant earning more than 2*s.* a week money wages all the year round. A peasant's family may be averaged at five persons. It is quite unnecessary to prove that a number of individuals can be fed at a cheaper rate, per head, than a single family. If further proof be required, it is only necessary to consider the cost of feeding the inmates of an English workhouse. Wheaten bread, with meat once or twice a week, and



soup or porridge on other days, can be supplied, fit for an English labourer, both in quantity and quality, for a fraction more than 1s. a week per head. It must be unnecessary to make any further remarks as to the rate. At 6*d.* per head, 500,000*l.* a year will maintain a permanent body of 400,000 persons, as well as the most comfortable of the Irish peasantry are now maintained. To estimate the annual expenditure at 500,000*l.* will, I think, be a great exaggeration.

The following statements, extracted from the evidence collected by the English Poor Law Inquiry, show the nature and extent of the demand upon the poor's rates in England, about fifty years after their establishment. The first parish is in Sussex, the second in Essex.

Moushall Quarter  
1615.

The accompte of Hugh Luck, one of the Overseers  
of the poore of the Parish of Mayfield, for the yeare  
of our Lord 1615.

	£	s.	d.
Item paid to Mother Evans at several tymes . . . . .	. 0	8	6
Item paid to William Moone for house rent for one yeare . . . . .	. 0	6	8
Item paid unto Gregory Sawyer for half one corde of wood for her . . . . .	. 0	3	9
Item paid for the burieng of Mother Evans and for canvas to her in and for watching with her and other charges . . . . .	. 0	10	9
Item paid to Gregory Rolfe the 22d of January . . . . .	. 0	6	8
Item paid to John Weston for one yeare's house rent for Mother Wilmshurst . . . . .	0	14	0
Item paid to Thomas Austen for one payre of cards for Margaret Penkhurst . . . . .	. 0	2	0
Item paid to John Weston for house rent for Loyal . . . . .	. 0	10	0
Item paid unto Thomas Maryan for one hundred of fagots for Mother Whitley . . . . .	. 0	5	0
Item paid to Thomas Ligh for 3 ells and a half of canvas, at 16 <i>d.</i> the ell for her . . . . .	. 0	4	8
Item paid for a wast-cote and a peticote for her . . . . .	. 0	19	0
Item paid more for other things for her . . . . .	. 0	6	0
Item paid more for one hundred of fagots for her . . . . .	. 0	5	0
Item paid to Mr Penkhurst for 4 yeares' rent for An Mephum's house ended at Michaelmas last . . . . .	. 0	26	8
Item paid to John Savage for writing out my three bookes to gather by . . . . .	. 0	0	12
Item paid to Idon . . . . .	. 0	0	12
Item paid to Beatrice Bolt for keeping of Tompkins' girl . . . . .	. 0	1	8
Item for writing of his Accompte . . . . .	. 0	0	12
<hr/>			
The whole sum layd out is . . . . .	. 6	13	4

	£	s.	d.
The sum of his Bookes cometh to . . . . .	. 13	1	11
Resting in his hands in the gather all . . . . .	. 6	8	7

Easter Monday, 1614, I find the following entries :—

	£	s.	d.
Collected by the Overseers of this last year, viz. Jno. Marshe, Samuel Winter Floode, and Joshua Draper, as appeareth by the rate given in by them	50	15	10
Paid out	47	6	10

Remaining due 3 9 3  
—History of Poor Laws in Braintree.—*English Poor Inquiry, App. C. p.* 199.

These are the only two instances which I can find ; they average 27*l.* estimating 15,000 parishes at that sum, the total expenditure in England then amounted to 400,000*l.* a year. It would not, however, be safe to rely upon a calculation made only from two instances, still I think it probable that the poor's rates were not over that sum at that period, because I find that about fifty years later, in the year 1680, or little more than a century after the passing of the 43rd of Elizabeth, that the poor's rates of England were estimated at 600,000*l.* a year. The population of England was then seven or eight millions, much the same as it is now in Ireland. The poor's rates had at that time pretty well reached their greatest height, if we deduct the payment of wages through the poor's rates since 1796, and allow for the difference of population, and of the prices of corn, for the improved condition of the labouring classes, which made it necessary as well as safe to give to those who become unable to provide for themselves, a much better provision than in former times, and also for the many heavy expenses which have during the last century been charged to the poor's rate, of which the following are the principal.

12 Geo. II. c. 29, &c.	County rate.
5 & 6 Wm. IV. c. 76, s. 92 (Corporation Reform Act)	Borough rate in the nature of a county rate.
7 & 8 Geo. IV. c. 31, s. 15	Compensation by the hundred in places not contributing to the county rate.
7 Geo. IV. c. 64	Costs and compensations in the prosecution of felony in such places.
25 Geo. II. c. 36, s. 5 ; 58 Geo. III. c. 70, s. 7 & 8	Costs of prosecuting persons keeping disorderly houses.
18 Geo. III. c. 19, &c.	Sums expended by constables in doing actual business in the parish, in the relief or removal of vagrants, &c.
11 Geo. IV. 1 Wm. IV. c. 30, s. 10	Making population returns.
6 Geo. IV. c. 50, s. 9	Printing a sufficient number of jury lists.

These charges are allowed by law, but being in the daily habit of examining parish accounts, I know that the poor's rates

have, during the last fifty or sixty years, been considered as the fund applicable to all parish purposes receiving the general sanction. It will immediately be seen that a just conclusion cannot be drawn as to the increase of pauperism in England, without making extensive deductions. I am myself strongly of opinion that the proportion of the population receiving parish relief had not increased during the century ended in 1790.

At the time of the establishment of poor laws in England, it has been shown that the state of the peasantry of England was very similar to the present state of the peasantry of Ireland. The foregoing expenditure would, therefore, show that the good effected was by some indirect influence of these laws, and not by the expenditure of money.

The mode of supplying the fund for building houses of refuge in Ireland, and for maintaining them and their inmates, is a point of some difficulty.

It would not be wise to risk the failure of funds upon which so much will depend, and Ireland affords ample evidence of the probability of the failure of the voluntary principle. The amount of the congregational collections is perhaps a fair criterion of the probable amount of success. More than 3*l.* or 4*l.* a year are rarely collected from any congregation, unless in some of the large towns; and even in the large towns it is with the greatest difficulty that the funds for the support of the mendicity institutions can be collected. The subscriptions to the Dublin mendicity have decreased one half in a few years. The dispensaries, which partly depend upon donations, are frequently discontinued, owing to the impossibility of collecting funds for their support; in the immense county of Mayo, private charity is only able to maintain three dispensaries.

As the dispensary system of Ireland is likely to be brought forward as the example of the efficiency of voluntary contributions, I will show the working of that system.

The dispensaries of Ireland are supported by funds, half of which are professedly voluntary, and half compulsory. The grand jury of Ireland are by law compelled to give, out of the grand jury cess or county rate, a sum not exceeding that subscribed for a dispensary in any place. The practical effect of this scheme is, that the whole is paid from the grand jury cess, which is a compulsory fund, and that the county who are taxed for it lose all control over its expenditure, which passes to a few irresponsible individuals. I have no hesitation in saying, that the scheme is an extensive fraud. The following is a fair account of the mode of raising the funds for nine out of ten dispensaries in Ireland.



A medical man is anxious to be appointed the attendant of a dispensary, and is willing to perform the duty, and supply medicines for 100*l.* a year; he goes to a few friends and asks them to subscribe to that amount, which they do, upon the promise that he will repay them; the money must be subscribed, as an oath to that effect is required before the grand jury can act. Upon the oath being made, the grand jury add 100*l.* from the county rate. The treasurer of the dispensary fund is generally a friend of the medical attendant; he permits the medical attendant to draw 150*l.* for his services, and 50*l.* for medicine; in other words, to take the 200*l.*: 100*l.* of which the medical attendant returns to his friends, as the amount of their subscriptions. The 100*l.* given from the county rates is the amount which he really receives, and for which he is willing to find medicines and to attend. At one place, in the neighbourhood of Dublin, the principal subscribers to the fund were the medical man, his wife, and each of seven children; in another, the medical attendant having ascertained the average cost of medicines, and attendance to his patients, during a few years, proposed to them to subscribe to his dispensary to that amount, upon the condition that he should not make any other charge for attending upon them. I was present at both of these discoveries. It may easily be perceived how much voluntary charity has to do with the support of dispensaries in Ireland; but if we suppose it possible to free this half-and-half principle from liability to fraud, there is an absurdity in its working, especially when intended to supply the exigencies of poverty, because in the poorest district the smallest sum will be raised, whilst in the poorest district the largest sum is required. If the object for which funds are to be raised is of national importance, then the legislature should place it beyond chance, and then the voluntary half of the principle is absurd; if the object be unimportant, then the legislature ought not to interfere, and the compulsory half is improper; and if the object be mischievous, it is the duty of the legislature to prevent even the voluntary fund. Both the support of the destitute, and the education of the poorer classes, is of too much importance to society to be consigned to the mercy of this fantastic principle, a principle in favour of which I have never heard even a plausible reason. What would he said of any man who should propose to place the judicial establishments of the country, the army or the navy, upon such a tenure? what would a large portion of this country say to subjecting the church establishment to this mode of support? yet the support of the destitute, and the education of the poor, is in every respect of as great national importance as the establishments I have named.

The grand argument of the advocates of the voluntary system is, that compulsory assessment diminishes private charity. How they arrive at this conclusion I am at a loss to conceive; I have heard the assertion, *usque ad nauseam*, but I have never heard the grounds upon which it is based. Is it based upon the absence of private charity in England? Is it based upon the boundless private charity in Ireland? Those who make the assertion must surely have forgotten that the largest compulsory assessment in the world is in England, or must have overlooked the endless number of institutions supported by voluntary contributions in this country. Have they never heard of soup kitchens, of distributions of coals, of blankets, &c. &c. &c.? if not, let them read Mr Chadwick's "Report on the Charities in Spitalfields." They must have forgotten, too, that England's charity has not staid at home; they must have forgotten that her charity has reached the suffering Greek, the suffering Pole, and the suffering of every other nation; and that, hardened as the heart of England is by assessment, it has even felt for those whom Ireland, not hardened by assessment, was unable to relieve. Has any one forgotten the great subscription in London, some years since, when more than 100,000*l.* were subscribed for the starving population on the west coast of Ireland? One-seventh of the whole of the poor's rates of England, viz. of eight millions, was expended in London and its immediate neighbourhood, and yet there is scarcely a principal street in that city in which there is not a palace dedicated to charity, and supported by voluntary contributions. I only wish that those who talk of compulsory payments destroying private charity could witness the energetic pleading for the poor which, as an assistant poor-law commissioner, I constantly witness in those rate-payers who have not been disabused of the erroneous reports which have been spread relative to the objects of the new system. When the deserving poor are concerned, I never meet with a man willing to curtail their comforts, though I frequently meet with those whose benevolent feelings would lead them to give charity where it is not required, and consequently where it will do mischief.

I may, perhaps, be told by those who object to assessment, that by private charity they do not mean almsgiving, but the kindly feelings which it creates, the sympathy which it produces between individuals and between classes, the general softening of the national character. This explanation will do nothing for their argument. Are the people of England worse parents, children, friends, or neighbours, than the people of any other country? Are they more brutal in their habits? Do they

exhibit a general carelessness about the sufferings of others? Perhaps a very fair test is the comparative extent and atrocity of crimes of violence on the person; if so, I think the moral statistics of England will bear comparison with those of any country in the world.

I am convinced that, to leave the destitute to voluntary charity, so far from encouraging, tends to destroy the finer feelings. When I first arrived in Dublin I suffered the greatest pain from the constant sight of half-naked and squalid human beings. I at first attempted to relieve them, but soon found that it was quite beyond my individual means to make the slightest impression upon the mass of misery, and gave up the attempt as hopeless. Each person is actuated by the same feeling, and thus charity ceases. By degrees I became accustomed to much of the misery which, on my arrival in Dublin, twelvemonths previously, had caused me to shudder. Many of the Englishmen who were on the Irish Poor Commission with me, admitted, that constantly witnessing scenes of misery had considerably blunted their feelings. The only scenes to which I did not become callous are those which may commonly be witnessed in Dublin after nightfall. On a winter's evening, about seven o'clock, wretched creatures, without any other covering than a blanket or an old ragged cloak, may be seen stretched by the railings of the kitchen windows, watching with intense eagerness for the potato peelings and for the scrapings of the plates, after the wealthier classes have dined—the tribe of Lazarus waiting for the crumbs. As these persons were a different set from those who appeared during the day, I suspect they had known better days, and had, through reverses which may overtake the wealthiest in this life of chances, fallen into penury. But their feelings having survived their prosperity, they were ashamed of the state to which they were reduced.

These scenes always made me rejoice in the comparatively happy lot of the working classes in my own country, who never can be reduced to utter destitution whilst the best institution which the wisdom and benevolence of man ever framed—the Poor Laws—exists. And yet, I had just left the Inquiry into the “Administration and Operation of the Poor Laws in England and Wales,” filled to overflowing with horror at the condition of our well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, happy and independent paupers.

I have often smiled at our English horrors when witnessing Irish scenes, and hoped that our own might never bear a worse character than at present. It is not surprising that the Irish think us a strange chimerical sort of people, upon learning that our greatest grievance is a fourpenny stamp on newspapers.



The knowledge of England in Ireland is not much better than the knowledge which Englishmen possess of Ireland. I was asked one day by an Irishman with whom I was talking about poor laws, whether I would reduce the Irish labourer to the level of the English pauper. I scarcely need say that he had never been in England. When I had described to him the food, clothing, habitation, &c. &c. of an English pauper, he soon perceived that no English pauper in his senses would change places with a farmer holding 20 acres in Ireland. I had just then returned from a visit to the most pauperised county in England—Kent, and had been delighted with the comfortable, roomy, substantial, neat, pretty, well-furnished cottages, with the good clothing, and the healthy, cheerful, independent countenances of the inmates. I must say, that if there were no choice but the squalid wretchedness and the crime of Ireland, or the out-door allowance system of England, vicious as I admit that system to be, I should not hesitate to embrace it, as a very minor evil.

The Scotch system is always adduced as an instance of the advantages of the voluntary over the compulsory system. Those who are so loud in their praises of the Scotch system, seem to have forgotten that the advantages are more likely in the mode of administering than in the mode of raising the fund. It does not appear to me, however, that any one knows much about the Scotch system; many pretend to the knowledge, but I suspect its worth. I have seen how completely the facts were at variance with the assertions made relative to England and Ireland, previously to the searching inquiries undertaken by the government; but even admitting all that is claimed for the administration in Scotland, and that the administration depends upon the mode of collection, I can only say that the collection is, to all intents and purposes, a compulsory collection. The law says, if you do not give sufficient, you shall be assessed. This is much of the sort of request which a civil highwayman makes when he lets you see that, if civility won't do, force will be applied. This voluntary system is the English system, if the English please to adopt it. The law only directs the overseer to raise by assessment whatever is required for the poor, it does not direct him to refuse voluntary contributions. If, therefore, a few foolish people in a parish choose to relieve their neighbours from their fair share of the contribution, they may indulge their kindly propensities without any risk of interference from the law. Our northern neighbours, who are not the least shrewd people of the three kingdoms, are beginning to discover that their voluntary system is excellent for relieving the un-

charitable at the expense of the charitable—a mere illustration of working the willing horse to death; and they are, consequently, very generally adopting assessment.

It must be evident that voluntary contributions should not be relied upon for the support of so important an institution as a provision for the destitute. The mode of raising a compulsory fund is, therefore, to be considered. A compulsory fund may be local or general. In England the tax is local; each parish is compelled to provide a sum equal to its expenditure. Local taxation is peculiarly unfitted to the purpose of supporting the destitute, because the power to supply is always in the inverse ratio to the demand. In those districts in which there are the greatest number of poor there are fewest persons to assess; whilst in those districts in which there is the greatest proportion of rich persons the smallest amount is required. The parishes of Spitalfields and Cornhill, in London, are exemplifications of local taxation, for the purpose of supporting the poor. In the first, all are poor; in the second, all are rich. This objection does not necessarily apply to local taxation. For police, lighting, draining, the greatest demand may be where there are the largest means. The practical working of a local tax in Ireland would be to relieve Ulster and Leinster to the ruin of Connaught and Munster. The people of Ulster have always fed the beggars of Connaught. There is more vagrancy in Ulster than in any part of Ireland, because it is the richest, and there is less vagrancy in Connaught, because it is the poorest; to use a homely phrase, “the crows follow the carion.” Connaught produces the beggars, but does not feed them. To such an extent is this the case, that the Assistant Commissioners who visited Connaught could not there gain any information relative to vagrancy; there were no vagrants. The best information was obtained in Ulster, in which they abound.

The same state exists between two neighbouring properties; vagrancy is the most extensive on the estate of the proprietor who charges a moderate rent, and gives good wages; it scarcely exists on the rack-rented estate, as the people have nothing to give. The beggars of the latter live upon the comfortable peasantry of the former. The rich have always maintained the poor either directly or indirectly. Another objection to local taxation for the support of the poor is, that whether it is accompanied with settlement laws or not, practices demoralizing both to the poor and to the rate-payers will arise. If settlement does not co-exist with local taxation, cruelty to the poor, and ill-will and fraud amongst the rate-payers will arise, from

the constant endeavour, by intimidation, persuasion, and bribery, to induce persons to transfer their claims for relief from one district to another; if it does, then extensive and expensive litigation between districts may result; a very large proportion of the poor's-rates of England have been expended in disputing settlements. Besides these evils, there is an unfairness in local taxation; much property thereby wholly escapes paying towards the support of the poor. The fixed property, land and buildings, bear nearly the whole burthen. There is a sentimental expression, that every man has a claim upon the land for support, in which there is as much reason as there would be in the assertion that every man has a claim upon the cotton factories for support. The support of the poor is as much the duty of every individual as the support of the judicial establishments, of the army and of the navy. The only mode by which the burthen can be made to fall equally upon all is, by placing it upon the same fund as those establishments, viz., upon the general exchequer, which directly or indirectly reaches every individual.

It will be impossible, in the present state of Ireland, to raise the requisite sum for the support of the poor; and I believe that, if it is attempted, a successful opposition will be made to the introduction of relief for the destitute in that country, and consequently Irish alliance will continue a disgrace and a needless expense to Great Britain. Ireland, in her present state, does not cost Great Britain less than a million and a half annually for military and police. It would be well to try whether 500,000*l.* a year, employed to prevent the fear of destitution, which is the ground of inquietude, would not be more effective than 1,500,000 expended to coerce those who will not starve quietly. I cannot believe that the people who gave twenty millions without a murmur, to sever the chains of the negro, will not give half the annual interest of that sum to assist those whom their money has been so lavishly expended to degrade. But I have one word more to say to the English and Scotch, as men of business. If they do not in a direct manner undertake the expense of relieving the poor of Ireland, expedients in the shape of government loans (which will never be repaid) will take ten times the amount from their pockets, and they will have the discomfiture of finding that their money has been lavishly expended to the benefit of a few private individuals, whilst the miseries of the poor remain without mitigation. There are many hands ready to grasp such loans; and many jobs are preparing in the shape of reclaiming waste lands, and employing the poor in constructing public works. Of the money



so granted, 99*l.* will go to increase rent-rolls for every 1*l.* which benefits the poorer classes. It should not be forgotten that Ireland has ever been the land of jobs.

The principal objection brought against a national fund for the support of the destitute is, that the people of each district will be lavish in its expenditure, because they have to contribute so small a proportion of what they expend. This might be true if they were not restricted as to the mode of giving; but if they are restricted to a form in which only those who ought to receive will accept, how can they be lavish? Lavish expenditure requires acceptors as well as donors. If a surgeon was to offer to amputate legs gratis, there would not be any danger of his time being absorbed, only those who found amputation requisite to save their lives would accept his offer. Superintendence is the next point which it is necessary to consider. The opponents of Irish poor laws state that the non-existence of a middle class to form local boards of superintendence is fatal to every plan. I do not believe that any district exists in Ireland of 100 square miles, in which four or five persons cannot be found fit to superintend the administration of relief. But I have to propose a plan which will not require local superintendence—a plan which was most successfully adopted for many years at the workhouse at Oswestry, in Shropshire. It was the custom of the parish of Oswestry to contract for the feeding of all the parishioners who might avail themselves of the workhouse during the year. They paid a fixed sum, and the contractor took the risk of numbers, and had neither more nor less, whether the numbers chanced to be 10 or 10,000. The first year the contract was taken at 2,000*l.*; the second at 1,400*l.*; the third at 900*l.*; and the fourth year at 400*l.* The price decreased as people became accustomed to the system, and consequently anxious to obtain the contract. In Ireland it will soon be perceived that the risk is not greater than is incurred by those who farm the tolls of roads, bridges, canals, or fees of any description, that there is an average number, above or below which the applicants do not materially vary, and that upon an average of the whole year the inmates each week will not greatly vary. With districts containing 100 square miles each, one contractor might easily supply nine workhouses, as there will be that number within a circle of ten miles round each centre. Fifty contractors might therefore supply the workhouses of the whole of Ireland. Under such a system there could not be any loss to the country by speculation; and it would be the duty of the master of the house to see that the contractor gave the quality of provisions, and in such rations as were specified in his contract. A board of guardians might be created in

each district, to receive and inquire into the complaints of the inmates, and to see that the contractor fulfilled his agreement. Upon this system of contracting not only the trouble and risk of purchasing and preserving provisions, but also the trouble of keeping and auditing accounts will be saved. The contractor should not have the slightest controul over the labour of the inmates or their general management.

As a central superintendence will be indispensable to any system of relief for Ireland, I cannot see any evil to arise from that superintendence vesting in the Poor Law Commission in London, but I can see very great advantage. Political religion so completely divides society in Ireland that it is scarcely possible for Commissioners, if placed in Dublin, to avoid private intercourse exclusively with one party, when, even if they do not imbibe the leanings and prejudices of that party, their impartiality will be suspected; and thus considerable difficulty will impede them in the execution of their office, and their acts will generally be liable to cause discontent. I do not, however, believe it possible for human beings to avoid, in some degree, being influenced by the feelings of those by whom they are continually surrounded. Party feeling in Ireland is very different from party feeling in England. It is the difference between water and spirit. To one accustomed to the excitement of Ireland, England becomes a dull monotony. A Tory and a Radical in England will meet in society, and each will admit of the other that he is an excellent, clever, well-intentioned man, but under mistake. The feeling in England is towards the theory, not towards the individual; in Ireland it generally takes a personal turn; and those who differ in religious persuasion, or on theories of government, will not allow that each other possess a single virtue. The party feelings of Ireland could not exist with Englishmen residing in London. In a town in which the people and the concerns, not only of the United Kingdom, but of the whole world are mingled, and become of common interest, narrow party spirit is destroyed. Ireland has long shown that local central government becomes a nucleus for the narrowest party feelings. It frequently happens in Ireland that a dispute exists between the parties in a parish or district, about which it is necessary for the Central Government to send an officer to inquire. The religio-political party in opposition to which the officer or his relations or friends belong are certain to be discontented, and to feel that partiality has governed his conduct. If the Central Control is in London, this evil will be avoided; an Englishman, a Scotchman, or Welshman, will be sent, and

to neither will partiality be imputed, unless he has long resided in Ireland. A further advantage will arise from having the administration of relief to the poor of both countries under the same Board; the experience of the one country will be carried into the other. A periodical transfer of Assistant-Commissioners from one to the other can be made. The English can be sent into Ireland, and the Irish Assistant-Commissioners can be brought into England; from such exchanges much information will be obtained as to the most rapid mode of assimilating the people of the two countries in condition, in feelings, and in habits.

A measure requiring so much prudence as the administration of relief in Ireland could not be better entrusted than to the present Board in London, who have already gained public confidence by the manner in which they have conducted the amendment of the administration of relief in England, and who have avoided alike the crotchets of those who would deprive the *destitute* of relief, and of those who would demoralize the labouring classes by the mode of administering it. It may perhaps be well to add one or two *Irish* gentlemen to the Board.

As many persons object to confining the public provision for the able-bodied to a workhouse, and as the scheme of public works, or out-door employment, has many able supporters, and many specious arguments in its favour, I feel bound to show why the Legislature ought not to adopt it. Every system of public provision must include the right, on the part of every member of society, to demand it. If the right be not granted, the feeling of security will not be created, and the power to raise the earnings of the labouring classes will not exist; thus the two principal objects of a public provision will be defeated. If out-door employment with the right is adopted, the following difficulties will arise:—

1st.—The difficulty of providing employment in each of several hundred districts, which will not interfere with existing employments, will be available at all times, and will have the semblance of utility.

2ndly.—The great difficulty, and the great expense of superintending those employed, even if suitable work can be devised.

3rdly.—The great difficulty of preventing the applicants from being more numerous than is requisite for producing the desired effect; and consequently the difficulty of keeping the expense to the public at the lowest cost, consistent with that object.



In providing employment, the first object is to avoid curtailing the ordinary occupations of the district. If great care be not taken in this respect, the system would destroy the existing demand for labour in the degree that it provided employment, and thus the whole of the working population would by degrees be thrown upon the public provision. All plans for forcing those who seek employment into the service of individuals, whether in agriculture or in trade, will be attended with the same pernicious results, as arose out of labour rates, roundsmen, ticket and billet systems in England. Every man forced into the occupation of a farmer or a manufacturer, will exclude one already voluntarily employed, and thus every workman will in time have been dismissed from independent labour, and forced to work under the public provision. The good workman and the bad workman, the idler and the industrious man, will be provided with an equally agreeable subsistence, and under such discouragement industry and skill will rapidly vanish. Of this the late Administration of the Poor Laws in England furnishes ample proof. Similar evils will follow the adoption of every plan for making the public provision repay its necessary expenditure, such, for instance, as by the creation of roads, bridges, &c. If the employment created be in manufactures, capital alone; if in agriculture, then both capital and land must be taken from those individuals who already employ workmen. The withdrawal of capital from the manufacturer, or of capital and land from the farmer, will necessarily diminish the power of the possessors to employ, and consequently will force them to dismiss some of their workmen. Those who are dismissed will of course apply for the public provision, and cause for their employment a further abstraction of the means of employing from individual farmers and manufacturers, when again a further number of those employed by individuals must be dismissed. Thus every attempt to employ will be followed alternately by an absorption of capital and a dismissal of workmen, until the whole of the workmen and the entire land and capital shall have become subservient to this species of public provision. At Loughborough the establishment of stocking manufactures in the workhouses did serious injury to the private manufacturers, and threw many workmen out of employment, who, in consequence, were compelled to resort to the parish manufactory. In the several districts of England, digging gravel, and breaking stones for the repair of the roads, is commonly resorted to as an occupation for those who seek the public provision. As neither of these works can with advantage be performed by machinery, every pauper employed upon them displaces an in-

dependent labourer, and makes him a pauper; they are improper occupations for a public provision. Occupations which introduce hand labour in the place of machinery can scarcely be said to interfere with existing employment. The withdrawal of capital from private individuals, and the extent of production, is so very small in proportion to the number of persons employed. In agriculture, the spade in the place of the plough, the flail in the place of the threshing machine, the hand-mill in the place of the wind, water, or steam-mill; in manufactures, the distaff for the mule and jenny, the hand for the power-loom, and the knitting-needles for the stocking-frame. Simple obsolete machinery will not, for the employment of dozens of individuals, require as great an outlay of capital as will the machinery of modern and scientific construction for the employment of a single individual. Neither will the capital for procuring the raw material, to keep dozens of individuals in employment, when working with such rude machinery, be as great as will be required for the occupation of a single individual working with improved machinery. Hamburgh is the only place in which an attempt is made to prevent the employment under the public provision from interfering with private occupations. In most other places the mischievous idea of making the occupation profitable prevails. The following is extracted from the report of the Poor Society in Hamburgh, p. 402, App. F, to Poor Law Inquiry in England.

We were continually endeavouring to find out some employment for our poor, the exercise of which required no great skill, *but at the same time without prejudicing those who had hitherto, without becoming a burden to their fellow-citizens, with difficulty supported themselves by their own hands.* The consideration of these two indispensable conditions, particularly necessary with us, where the pressure on all kinds of easier gains is so great, especially as our institution cannot employ the capital intrusted to it in extensive commercial speculations, has hitherto placed insuperable difficulties in our way.

How much the more pleasing, therefore, must be the offer made us in the course of last year by the respectable commercial house of Emanuel and Son, by which both conditions were answered as much as possible. This house agreed, upon condition of delivering the necessary materials and payment of moderate wages, to have woollen stockings and socks knitted by our poor for exportation. We did not hesitate to agree to this immediately, and accordingly a contract was made with this house; in pursuance of which it delivers for a year in advance the necessary quantity of knitting yarn for 2,000 dozen pair of socks, and engages to send socks knitted by our poor beyond sea, or at all events not to sell them at any place within ten miles (German) of Hamburgh, and also, as much as it depends upon them, to take care that none of the articles come afterwards to this market.

Some of the parishes in England created employment for those who could not find it in the ordinary avocations. This

employment usually had the merit of not abstracting much capital from private individuals, and of not interfering with private employment, but it was devoid of the semblance of utility. The employment created was carrying bags of sand and wheeling barrows of gravel to and from stated spots, and continually re-digging the same piece of land. The moral effect of these employments, however, was of the worst description. Those who were employed could not perceive that the toil which they were made to endure served any good end, and consequently it became vexatious, and malice was attributed as the motive of those who enforced it.

With such an impression, it is not strange that the paupers should have endeavoured to give as much vexation to their superintendents as possible. The result of such employment has usually been the complete demoralization of those who were employed, and the generation of bad feelings towards the working classes in those who had to superintend them, and also in those who witnessed their conduct.

It is extremely probable that work could be found in a great many parts of Ireland, which would possess the requisites of not interfering with existing employment, and of having the semblance of utility. The reclamation of bog does not necessarily require expensive machinery, and would not interfere with existing employment; but any system of public employment must ensure work at all times, and within a reasonable distance of every labourer, or it will fail to operate as a minimum to wages and a maximum to rents. Each work-station, therefore, could not well serve for a more extended radius than three miles, because a labourer could scarcely go to and from his work at a greater distance. It may be said, that he could remove to the neighbourhood of the station; if so, the public must either provide cabins at the station, or those who require work must hire them. That proprietors in the neighbourhood of the station would willingly centralize all the worst characters and worst workmen of a large district, without some countervailing advantage, is very improbable. Perhaps the countervailing advantage might be monopoly of cabin rents, in the payment of which the principal portion of the earnings of those in public employment would be absorbed; and thus the advantage of the public employment would be so much reduced as to frustrate its principal object—to support wages and to check rents. Perhaps an attempt would be made to meet this evil by giving an additional sum to pay the rent, and then a door will be opened to evils similar to those which were produced in England from the parish paying the rents of labourers' cottages. The working classes



are attached to the neighbourhood in which they have long resided, and in which their relatives and friends reside, and consequently they will there submit to much lower wages than are offered at the public works, rather than remove to a great distance; the same feeling will induce those who have become located at the public works to continue there unless very much higher wages, with permanent work, were guaranteed them in that part of the country in which they were required. Thus, distant public works would have a different tendency to that required; the distance would prevent those who are temporarily unemployed from resorting to them rather than compete for private work at low wages, or otherwise it will render a permanent pauper of every labourer who went to them.

If public employment be substituted for the workhouse system, a station must be established within a convenient distance, say within three miles, of every labourer. This will require at least a station for every twenty-four square miles, and about 700 stations for Ireland. It is almost needless to say that it will be nearly, if not quite impossible, to find in each of so many districts work which will at all times be available, have the semblance of utility, and yet not interfere with existing labour. Reclamation of bog cannot be conducted at all seasons; neither can digging land. Many weeks intervene when no land within a convenient distance requires ploughing.

If it were possible to find eligible employment in every district, at least 700 superintendents would be required. If the only work to be found be digging land, which would otherwise be ploughed, and such only could be found in many districts, portions of the labourers in public employment would often be engaged at several different parts of a district, and then a single superintendent for each district would not be sufficient. It would not be merely necessary to require a proper share of work from those in public employment, but to guard against their being bribed to do work which would otherwise be done by private labourers. If care was not taken to prevent that species of fraud, the system of displacing private labourers would be introduced. It is needless to say that the expense of superintending outdoor employment must be immense.

The great difficulty of preventing the applicants for public employment being more numerous than is requisite to produce the desired effect on wages and rents, and consequently the difficulty of keeping the expense to the public at the lowest cost consistent with those objects, are great objections to outdoor employment.

It is essential to these ends that public employment should

be furnished to those only who have neither land nor private employment.

Any scheme for giving employment must include some standard of occupation. Either piece-work or time-work must be resorted to. Piece-work must, of course, be regulated by reference to the quantity which an average workman can complete, working a reasonable number of hours daily. The strongest and best will complete their task early, and then undertake private employment, or rent land, upon which to expend their remaining energy. Time-work, when possible, is preferable, because it can be made to occupy the usual working hours of the day, and thus render it more difficult for a public labourer to interfere with those who are in private employment. If time-work, however, was resorted to, those who were employed would fatigue themselves as little as possible, in order that they might reserve their strength for performing work in after hours. Agricultural labourers would hire ground to till, and workmen generally would accept employment. Every twelve hours of private employment obtained by a public labourer will displace a private labourer, and drive another to accept public employment, and thus increase the number of paupers, and the demand upon the public purse. As the right to relief is necessary to produce tranquillity and better wages in Ireland, and as it is impossible to determine whether a man has performed the largest quantity of work, and in the best manner he is able, there is every chance that labourers would rarely trouble themselves to seek employment, but would invariably go to the public occupations, upon which they would be able, without much exertion, to obtain as much as they could in private employment by performing a hard-day's work. It was common for labourers in England to go to the overseer, and tell him that he must find them work; and when he bid them apply to the employers in their own and in neighbouring parishes, they refused, and demanded work or allowance. Where a well-managed workhouse existed, however, this never occurred. The labourers will only enter that when every endeavour to procure work has failed them—that is, only on those occasions when it is desirable they should receive public support. The following extracts will give some idea of the effect of public employment as a system of charity: I cannot conceive any mode of giving the legal right to relief, which I have shown to be essential, and yet to avoid similar evils resulting from out-door employment.

*Dorset.* P. 13.—In the parish of Sturminster Newton, in the district of that name, the overseers who employed the single men to get gravel from the

pits, for road-mending, and who paid them by the piece, would not permit them to earn more than three shillings per week, though they could have earned ten or twelve shillings.

If these three shillings were earned in two days, the man had four days which were either unemployed, or which he might employ wherever he could find work. I have not met with any instance in Dorsetshire, of the roundsmen, or billet-system; nor of the relief of paupers without demanding some work in return; that work, however, is in general a mere superfluity, lazily executed, and may be termed an excuse for labour, rather than labour itself.

*Hampshire.* 306. The farm is situated in a cold district; the soil a stiff clay. It is looked after by a bailiff; his salary 30*l*. The winter before last there were 240 men at one time sent to be employed upon it, at the same wages then generally given by the farmers, viz. 9*s*. per week: these men scarcely did any work, and the bailiff had not the power to make them. There was no efficient control, and nearly in all cases it will be the worst workmen and worst characters who come for parish work; the greater therefore the necessity for a rigid superintendence, which, whilst treating them fairly, will insist on a due return of labour. The rural police is inadequate to enforce obedience, and the authorities, from the property they have at stake, and the risks they incur, are often found not to act with the requisite decision and firmness.

This was shown during the period when so many labourers were sent to the farm, which they twice left in a body, proceeding to and threatening the Directors.

*Sussex.* 202.—These men at one time were required to bring up bags of beach on their shoulders for mending the roads, and were shut up in the workhouse yard; the object of which was to prevent imposition on the parish, by their receiving parish pay as unemployed, when they were, in fact, getting work from farmers. This degrading mode having attracted public notice, has been discontinued, and the present plan is to require them to attend a roll-call at nine in the morning and three in the afternoon, at the workhouse, and no work whatever is required of them.

*Kent.* 899.—No young man seems anxious to fit himself for becoming either a thatcher, hedger, or ditcher; *they prefer lingering on the parish farm*, and trusting to the pay they can wring from the parish, with scarcely any return of labour. We learned from one of the farmers, who happened to be present at the vestry held at the poor-house during the period of our visit, the following then recent facts: During the interval between hay-making and harvest, he wanted to have some roots of trees grubbed up; he went to the parish farm, on which, at this period, 30 labourers were employed, and tendered the job, at which the labourers might have earned 2*s*. 6*d*. a day, or perhaps more, to any individual there; not a single person would undertake it. He went on and found two men at a distance, still, however, at work on the parish farm; he offered the job to them; under a variety of pretexts they declined it; it was at last accepted by two others, after considerable hesitation, and a number of frivolous excuses.

*Essex.* 228.—They are set to work on the roads and in a gravel pit, where they idle away their time, so that the stubbing gravel, which might be done for 1*s*. per load, has cost 20*s*. The labourers are become very unmanageable.

*Suffolk.* 346.—Parishes frequently hire land for the purpose of setting to work those who are without employment, which often turns out as bad as well as unprofitable an expedient as setting them to work on the roads. In one parish, in which, seven years ago, there were about 47 men and boys on the roads during winter, it was considered to be a mode of disposing of them so hurtful to their character, that a field of nine acres was hired by the



parishioners for the purpose of keeping them profitably employed. The extent was not sufficient to allow of its being given out in task-work, so they were set to dig it at day's wages, and although it was considered better than keeping them on the roads, yet in truth they were as disorderly and idle in the field as on the road. When a demand for labour arose, the digging of the land was often entirely stopped, and it was found necessary to use horses, in order that the cultivation might be carried on. After fighting on in this way for some four years, the parish was forced to give it up, and an agreement to distribute the labour over the land was entered into with effect. In another parish, where 20 acres of land were hired for the same purpose, it was let out by piecework, but no man was allowed more than would bring in 1s. 6d. a day, or less to single men. It thus happened that the task was either completed by two or three o'clock, and the rest of the day was spent in idleness, or they worked so lazily that the whole day was consumed at it. The men, besides, were so unruly, that it required a man of courage to keep them under control, a quality in which some of the overseers were deficient.

*Northampton.* 397.—In very many instances, a single man is paid nearly as much, and a man with a large family quite as much, for lounging a few hours away in nominal work on the roads (in some cases even for standing idle in the street), as he would be if he were employed from sunrise to sunset by the farmer.

400.—The overseer, about two years ago, obtained the consent of the vestry to try a plan of his own with them. He told them the parish would give them nothing without having the benefit of their whole labour, and accordingly set them to work, to which they were not accustomed, in getting stone out of a stone-pit by the grate at a low rate. In one day a great number, and in two the rest went off, swearing at the overseer and damning the parish, and they did not apply again. I inquired whether, as this had been found to answer so well in this instance, it had been tried again, and *I found that in winter it was not considered possible to use the pits*, and the people were allowed to idle about the roads; but in spring it was occasionally made use of with great effect, both upon manufacturers and upon farm labourers; and while it was in action, the people were more cautious in leaving their employers upon trivial pretences. At Oundle, the same sort of thing was carried into effect much more systematically upon the parish farm, as I shall have occasion to state hereafter.

In the towns (I allude particularly to the parish of All Saints, Northampton, Kettering and Peterborough) the paupers are employed in sweeping the streets and keeping them clean; and, as a specimen of the mode in which this is done, a clergyman at Kettering told me that he had seen three men that day taking charge of one wheelbarrow. The overseer there gave me an anecdote of one of their paupers, named William Makers, who was allowed 11s. a week for sweeping the streets, and working occasionally on some land which the parish hire, but which is not enough to give all their men employment. A job was found for him in clearing a pond, which he considered to be too dirty work to soil his fingers with, and accordingly excused himself.

At Peterborough, a place where the rates were very high, and the complaints of the insolence of the paupers very great, the same mode of mock employment by sweeping the streets had been tried, as a kind of punishment for some of the paupers who had hooted the overseer to his house a little before. Some of them turned their brooms up, and amused themselves with scraping the streets with the poles; others set to work with such vehemence as to wear out their new brooms in a very little time.

P. 401.—In some cases I found the roundsmen system combined with working on the road, some men being sent round to the farmers, and those

for whom no work could be discovered being sent on the roads. This was the case at Bozeat, and the value of the labour in both cases was nearly equal ; they did as little as they could, whether they were in the service of the farmer or on the road.

*Oxford.* 901.—There is no parish work of any kind. The paupers, at one time, were set to stone-breaking ; but it was found that they destroyed their tools, and that their earnings were insufficient to pay for the repairs.—[*Appendix A to the Report of the Poor Law Inquiry Commission.*]

The arguments which I have urged against public employment are only directed against it as a system of out-door relief. If the discretion of refusing relief is given to any one, the desired effects upon crime, wages, and rents will not be produced ; and if the right to out-door relief be granted in any shape, it will be impossible to prevent abuse. The workhouse cannot be abused. He who can live out of the institution nearly as well by labour will never enter it. The fact, therefore, of a person entering the institution is proof that he is deserving of its shelter. If with food not better than the present bare subsistence of the Irish peasantry, and work as hard as they now perform, a number of able-bodied persons are found to remain in the workhouses for months together, it will be evident that there is a surplus of labourers in the neighbourhood, and it will then become the duty of the Legislature to provide for its disposal, either by emigration or by some other means. Workhouses must be built for the aged, for orphans, for widows with young children, as district hospitals, and may as well therefore be employed as a shelter for those of the able-bodied who are temporarily destitute, and for the purpose of ascertaining the actual surplus, if there is any, of which it will be requisite to dispose ; for no one, of course, would contemplate retaining a large number of able-bodied men permanently in a workhouse.

I now beg to guard myself against the imputation of being inimical to giving to the Irish people any assistance which it is in the power of Great Britain to give. The people of England have, against their will, paid large sums of money for the oppression of Ireland, and I am sure will now cheerfully give whatever will conduce to her prosperity. But they know the difference between generosity and extravagance. My object is to show at how trifling an expense the regeneration of Ireland may be ensured. I am anxious that no misconception of the cost should lead any to despair, and that my fellow-countrymen who are anxious to assist Ireland should not be misled and foster private interests, whilst they imagine they are aiding in the public good. If the moral incubus—the feeling of insecurity as to the continuation of their subsistence—be removed from the minds of the working classes of Ireland, that country

will rapidly improve. Her people are clever, frugal, and industrious. They want but the same assistance that the people of Great Britain possess, and under which they have flourished beyond any country of Europe, to become the "Sister Isle" in the best sense of the term—sister in peace and prosperity—sister in a happy and flourishing population.

Every attempt at forcing capital into Ireland must fail. Remove the impediment to its introduction—insecurity of person and property—and it will enter in the best shape; it will enter with its possessors, each with his skill and methodical habits, with which only can labour be productive. It is almost impossible for a Government to manage the outlay of capital with success. This no people understand better than the English; and of this impossibility Ireland has given ample proof. For the improvement of that country much money has been expended, and what is the result? Let us turn, however, to England. For the canals, rail-roads, bridges, docks, harbours, and other works of a stupendous character, how much money has been voted by the Legislature? Constructing rail-roads and canals will not lead to the rise of large manufacturing towns—constructing harbours and docks will not bring shipping into them. The Bridgewater canal was not the cause of the trade of Manchester, but the consequence. The fine docks at Liverpool did not cause the shipping to frequent that port, but the number of ships required for the trade caused the creation of the docks. One would imagine that the Irish would be the first to exclaim against the fallacy of public works being the source of prosperity. They ought to know, by sad experience, that they are but the indications of prosperity. If they are the source of prosperity, why is the sole commerce on the two beautiful canals which run west from Dublin confined to half a dozen boat loads of turf in a week? Those canals are finer than any in England, and each is as commodious as a canal from Portsmouth to London need be, for the passage of all the shipping which now comes to the latter port by the British Channel. The Custom-house and the Post-office in Dublin were, till lately, as large as the combined buildings of London, Liverpool, and Glasgow. The Bank of Ireland is much larger than the Bank of England, though the money transactions of the foreign commerce of the whole world are done in London. In fact, similar exemplifications of the adage of the "Cart before the horse" are every where to be seen in Ireland. If England were to expend her whole capital upon public works in Ireland, a few contractors might be enriched; and if the waste lands were reclaimed, the rent-rolls of the wealthy might be



increased, but the labouring classes would not be benefitted thereby—they would then, as now, be confined to a bare subsistence of potatoes.

Besides what has been said, every plan for the expenditure of public money for the improvements of Ireland, with which I am acquainted, is open to the most profligate jobbing, in spite of the utmost precaution which it is in the power of any Government to take.

During the last ten years measure after measure has been passed for the improvement of Ireland, acts against subletting, for emancipation, for coercion, for peace-preserving, for grand jury improvements, and for a variety of other purposes; but the people of Ireland are nevertheless just as wretched and just as turbulent as they were twenty or fifty years back, although of each measure in succession the tranquillity of Ireland has been prophesied. The same degree of wretchedness, the same degree of turbulence will exist a century hence, for any thing which any measure I have ever heard proposed for Ireland will do in the absence of a Poor Law. A people ever on the brink of starvation will ever be irritable, ever anxious for change, under the impression that change may improve their condition, but cannot injure them. Some assert that the constant excitement in that country is the cause of the poverty, but sufficient has been said to show it is not the cause, but the consequence. A Poor Law must be the ground of improvement in Ireland. Until a provision shall be created for the destitute, legislating for that country is like building upon the sands. The *Standard* newspaper of the 24th May last, designates a Poor Law for Ireland as “that real and substantial equilization of the Irish with the British people, that must supply the basis of all sound schemes of uniformity.” With this remark I perfectly concur, and a little reflection will show its truth. The reason daily assigned for legislating differently for Ireland, is the difference in the social state of that country, which difference consists in the existence of a wealthy and intelligent middle class in England, and the almost total absence of such a class in Ireland. We have already seen that, in the absence of a public provision for the destitute, the introduction and the accumulation of capital in Ireland are almost impossible, and hence the impossibility of a middle class to excite and direct the energies of the people, and develope the resources of the sister kingdom.